VOL. 8

SOS

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SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

JEROEN BOSCH
EDITOR

VOL. 8

No time to study opening theory? Shock your opponent with an SOS!

NEW IN CHESS

SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

8

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JEROEN BOSCH

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2008 New In Chess – The Netherlands

© 2008 New In Chess
Published by New In Chess, Alkmaar, The Netherlands
www.newinchess.com
Appears twice a year

A previous version of Chapter 4 has appeared
in New In Chess Magazine.

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Cover design and lay-out: Steven Boland
Drawing on frontcover: Zander Dekker
Translation: Jeroen Bosch (Chapter 16)
Production: Joop de Groot
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Printed in the Netherlands
ISBN: 978-90-5691-222-2

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CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

The Unknown 'Refutation'

SOS-8, Chapter 2, p.17

In this SOS volume you will find an article by Ruben Felgaer on the Caro-Kann with 2.♘e2. In modern chess Nigel Short has probably done most to popularize this odd knight move, however the idea goes back to the early decades of the previous century.
IM Janos (Ion) Balogh (1892-1980), born in the Austro-Hungarian empire in the area of what later became Western Rumania, was an early expert. Dutch IM Gerard Welling informed us that Balogh eventually gave up on 2.♘e2 because of 2...d5 3.e5 d4!?. Interestingly, nobody ever played this against Balogh – he just didn't have a clue what to do after 3...d4.

□ **Thal Abergel**
■ **Merab Gagunashvili**
Cappelle la Grande 2007

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 d4!?

The move 3...d4 cuts off White's e-pawn from its central neighbour. Creative play is now required from both sides.

4.b4!?

White aims to isolate Black's d-pawn by preventing c6-c5 and is going to attack the little guy with ♗b2. Ironically, Black has moves like ...♕d5 and ...g5 to isolate and attack the e5-pawn, as may be seen from the following practical examples:

– 4.♘g3 ♕d5! 5.♕e2 (5.f4 g5!?) 5...♘d7 6.f4 g5 7.c4 (7.e6) 7...♕e6 8.f5 (8.d3 gxf4 9.♗xf4 ♗g7) 8...♕xe5 and Black was just a pawn up in Smith-Broom, England tt 2003/04.
– 4.♘f4 g5! 5.♘d3 ♕d5 6.b3? ♗g7 7.c4 ♕e4+ 8.♕e2 ♕xe2+ 9.♗xe2 ♗f5 10.♗b2 ♗xd3 11.♗xd3 ♗xe5 likewise netted the second player the e-pawn. Parkin-Rutherford, Glenrothes 1996.
– 4.c3!? c5 5.f4 ♘c6 6.♘g3 g5!? 7.fxg5 ♕d5 8.♕e2 ♗g7 9.♕e4 ♗e6 10.♗b5 ♗xe5 11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.d3 and now 12...h6 would have been a clear improvement over 12...♗xg3+? 13.hxg3 ♕xe4+?! 14.dxe4, Niedermaier-Burggraf, Forchheim 2002.
– An interesting option is 4.c4.

4...a5 5.♗b2 d3! 6.♘f4! 6.cxd3 axb4 favours Black. **6...dxc2 7.♕xc2 e6** 7...axb4 8.e6!? leads to complications. **8.b5 ♘e7 9.♘c3 ♘g6 10.♘xg6 hxg6 11.♗e2** It is better to develop than to play 11.♘e4

cxb5 12.♗xb5+ ♗d7 which merely eases Black's task. **11...cxb5 12.♘xb5 ♘c6 13.0-0** White has a pleasant edge. **13...♗e7 14.a3 0-0 15.♖fb1 ♗d7 16.♗c3 ♘b8**

17.♘d4!? Abergel takes the draw by repetition against his higher-rated opponent. **17...♖a7 18.♘b5 ♖a8 19.♘d4 ♖a7 20.♘b5** ½-½

Amateurs and GMs play 3...d5

SOS-1, Chapter 13, p.106

We received a sympathetic letter from Erwin Bilgen, praising SOS as the ideal weapon for the amateur chess player. Erwin included a game of his own with 3...d5 in the Modern. This is actually a great surprise weapon that merits some attention in different versions. **1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 d5**

● 4.♘xd5 c6 5.♘c3 ♕xd4 6.♗d3 ♘d7?! (Better are 6...e5 7.♘f3 ♕d8 8.0-0 ♘e7 or 6...♘f6 7.♘f3 ♕d8) 7.♘f3 ♕d6 8.♕e2 ♘c5 9.♗c4 e5? 10.♗e3 ♘e6?! 11.♖d1 ♕e7 12.a4 f6?! 13.♕d2 g5 14.0-0 ♘h6 and now White played the cheeky 15.♘d5!? which worked out well after 15...cxd5 16.exd5 ♘d8 (16...♘f4!) 17.d6 in Zagema-Martens, Dutch tt 2007/08.

● 4.exd5 ♘f6 5.♗c4 ♘bd7 6.♘ge2 ♘b6 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♕d3 a6 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.♗d2 ♘fxd5 11.♘xd5 ♕xd5 12.0-0 ♘c4 13.♗c3 ♘d6 14.♘f4 ♕f5 15.♕xf5 ♘xf5 and Black was better in Thiess-Bilgen, Düsseldorf 2007.

● 4.exd5 ♘f6 5.♗b5+ ♘bd7 6.♗g5 0-0 7.♗xd7 ♕xd7 8.♕f3 ♖b8 (8...b5! was recommended in Europa Rochade 2007/11. Too risky then is 9.d6: after either 9...♖b8 10.dxc7 ♖b6, Europa Rochade, or 9...cxd6! 10.♕xa8 ♗b7 11.♕xa7 ♖a8 12.♕b6 ♗xg2) 9.♘ge2 b5 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 (10...exf6 11.♘e4 ♖e8) 11.♘e4 ♗g7 12.0-0-0 ♖e8 13.♘f4 and both the game continuation 13...♕g4, Baramidze-Troyke, Nuremberg 2007, and 13...♗h6 give Black equal chances.

The ...d5 thrust is also interesting under slightly different circumstances.

☐ **Arkady Naiditsch**
■ **Vitaly Tseshkovsky**
Moscow 2005

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 a6!?

An interesting move. Black plays a Pirc/Modern Defence without committing his d-pawn just yet. Should White decide to prevent ...b5 with say 4.a4 then Black will happily transfer the game into the Pirc, arguing that the inclusion of 3...a6 4.a4 favours him. Of course, 3...a6 is provocative, and Naiditsch needs no further encouragement to lash out with his h-pawn.

4.h4!?
Not illogical, the ...g6 pawn is a clear target, and White keeps an opening edge after 4...h5 (which has occurred several times in practice).
4...d5!? 5.♘xd5!
5.e5 h5 is very OK for Black, while after 5.exd5 ♘f6 the inclusion of 3...a6 and 4.h4 favours Black compared to our regular SOS-line.
5...c6 6.♘e3 ♕xd4 7.♗d3 7.♕xd4 ♗xd4 8.h5! ♘d7 9.f4 ♗g7 10.e5 ♘b6 11.g4 ♘h6 12.g5 ♘f5 13.♗d3 ♘g3 14.h6 was Motylev-Chernyshov, Krasnoyarsk 2003. **7...b5** 7...e5 8.♘c4 ♕d8 9.♗e3± demonstrates that the inclusion of 3...a6 doesn't always favour Black – square b6 is a big problem here. Quite natural though was 7...♘f6. **8.h5 ♘d7 9.♘f3 ♕d6 10.a4 ♗b7 11.♘g4** Aiming for 12.h6. **11...gxh5** Playing for a risky tactic. 11...♘gf6 12.h6 ♗f8 13.♘xf6+ exf6 with an unclear game. **12.♖xh5**

12...♗xb2 This was the point of his previous move. **13.♗xb2 ♕b4+ 14.♔f1 ♕xb2 15.e5** Black has won a pawn, but at a considerable risk. **15...♘c5 16.♘g5!? ♘xd3 17.cxd3 f5 18.♘e3 ♕xe5?** Missing White's retort. **19.♘f7!** winning an exchange since 19...♔xf7 20.♖xf5+ loses on the spot. White won on the 35th move.

□ **Vidmantas Malisauskas**
■ **Boris Chatalbashev**
Crete Ech-tt 2007

1.e4 g6 2.♘c3 ♗g7 3.h4!?
An interesting sideline. Malisauskas has frequently played this set-up versus the Modern.
3...h5
Stopping the march of the h-pawn is most popular in practice.
– 3...c5 4.h5 (the only consistent move) 4...♘c6 5.♗b5 ♘d4 6.♗c4 a6 7.♘ce2 e6 8.♘xd4 cxd4 9.d3 h6 10.hxg6 fxg6 11.♗b3 and White was better in Malisauskas-Dziuban, Yerevan 1996.
– 3...c6 4.h5 (again the only sensible continuation) 4...d5 5.d3! and now either 5...e5 6.g3 d4 7.♘ce2 g5 8.f4 g4 9.fxe5 ♗xe5 10.c3 c5 11.cxd4 cxd4 12.♗f4 f6 13.♗d2!? which was unclear in Malisauskas-Minasian, Budapest 1996. Or 5...dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♗f5 7.h6!? ♗e5 8.♘f3 ♗xe4 9.dxe4 (9.♘xe5 ♗xg2 10.♗xg2 ♕a5+) 9...♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1 ♗c7 11.♘g5 ♘d7 12.♗c4 with an endgame plus in Sadler-Polzin, Germany Bundesliga 2000/01.
4.d4 d5!?
Our SOS move! The inclusion of 3.h4 h5 slightly favours Black.
5.exd5 ♘f6 6.♗c4 ♘bd7 7.♘f3 ♘b6 8.♗b5+
The check is inconsistent with his 6th move. However, Malisauskas now probably realized that the inclusion of h4 h5 enables Black to place his bishop on g4 with particular strength. 8.♗b3 a5 9.a3 a4 10.♗a2 ♘bxd5 or 10...♗g4.
8...♗d7 9.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 10.♘e5
10.0-0 ♘fxd5 is more than OK for Black.
10...♕f5 11.♕e2 0-0 12.f3!? Trying to make something of his early h4 advance. **12...♖ad8 13.g4 ♕c8 14.♗g5** Black is somewhat better after 14.♗d2 ♘bxd5 15.0-0-0 ♘xc3 16.♗xc3 ♕e6. **14...♘bxd5 15.♘xd5 ♖xd5 16.0-0-0 c5** Very sound,

but Black could also consider 16...♖fd8. **17.dxc5 ♕xc5** The most natural move, but White can now force a draw. Interesting is 17...♖xc5!? when 18.♗xf6 is met by 18...exf6 19.♘d3 ♖e8. **18.♗xf6!** Otherwise Black is better. **18...♗xf6 19.♘d7**

And now White does not gain material because of **19...♗xb2+! 20.♔xb2 ♕b4+** when Black forces perpetual check. **21.♔c1** Not 21.♔a1? ♖b5!. **21...♕a3+ 22.♔b1 ♕b4+ 23.♔c1 ♕a3+** ½-½

Out of the French Book

SOS-3, Chapter 8, p.71

□ **Juan Mellado Trivino**
■ **Mikel Huerga Leache**
Andorra 2007

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗d3 c5 4.exd5!
4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘e2 cxd4 6.cxd4 ♘b4 was Bluvshtein-Degraeve, Montreal 2002. The text was given as an improvement in SOS-5.
4...♕xd5 Safer is 4...exd5. **5.♘c3! ♕d8**
Obviously not 5...♕xg2?? 6.♗e4 trapping the queen.
However, 5...♕xd4 is also risky. The game Bosch-Stellwagen, Dutch tt 2006/07, went 6.♘f3 ♕d8 7.♕e2 ♘c6 8.♗f4 (8.♗b5) 8...♗d6 9.♗xd6 ♕xd6 10.♗b5 with sufficient compensation for the pawn but no more. After the game it was established that 6.♘b5 ♕d8 7.♗f4 ♘a6 8.♕e2 gives White very dangerous compensation. For example: 8...♘f6 9.0-0-0 ♗d7 10.♘f3.
6.dxc5 ♗xc5 7.♘e4 ♗e7 8.♕g4

8...g6 9.♕g3 ♘c6 10.♗d2 ♘f6 11.0-0-0 0-0 12.h4 White gets there first. **12...♕d5 13.♘c3 ♕e5** 13...♕a5. **14.f4 ♕a5 15.♘f3 ♘b4 16.♘e5 ♘fd5?** 16...♘xd3+ was correct. Now White has a strong pawn sacrifice. **17.♗c4! ♘xc3 18.♗xc3 ♘xa2+ 19.♗xa2 ♕xa2** Black has won a pawn and his queen is uncomfortably close to White's king, but whereas White is fully developed Black's queenside is doing nothing. White has a winning attack after **20.h5 g5** What else? **21.fxg5 ♕a1+ 22.♔d2 ♖d8+ 23.♘d3 ♗d6 24.♕f3 ♕a4 25.♕f6 ♗f4+ 26.♔e2** and Black resigned, for 26...♕xc2+ 27.♖d2 is game over.

An Easy Win

SOS-7, Chapter 5, p.50

Over the past few years Shirov has stubbornly upheld his 5.g4 gambit versus the Philidor. In SOS-7 a recent convert, Friso Nijboer, took stock. In the 2007 European Team Championship Ante Brkic scored an easy win.

□ **Ante Brkic**
■ **John Trevelyan**
Crete Ech-tt 2007

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e5 4.♘f3 ♘bd7 5.g4 h6

According to Nijboer this 'appears ridiculous as 6.g5 hxg5 7.♘xg5 gives White an untouchable knight on g5 – the square f7 is extremely vulnerable.'

6.g5 hxg5 7.♘xg5 ♗e7

This developing move is a mistake. White can now attack f7 forcing Black to castle into the storm. Nijboer indicates in SOS-7 that the correct response is 7...exd4 8.♕xd4 c6. He then shows how White can keep an edge. Instead of 8...c6, worse is 8...♘e5?! 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.f4 ♘fg4 11.h3 ♘h6 12.♖g1 ♘c6 13.♕d3 ♘g8 14.♗e3 f6 15.♘f3 ♗f8 16.0-0-0 with a superior game in Nepomniachtchi-Hautot, Fügen 2006.

8.♗c4 0-0 9.♖g1

With the g-file already open Black's king is not safe after having been forced to castle kingside.

9...exd4

9...c6 10.d5!? b5 11.♗b3 b4 led to a four queen game after 12.dxc6 bxc3 13.cxd7 cxb2 14.dxc8♕ bxc1♕? (14...bxa1♕ 15.♕h3 ♕a5+ 16.♗d2 ♕xd1+ 17.♔xd1 ♕c7 18.♖g3 with a winning attack) 15.♕h3? (missing an immediate win with 15.♗xf7+! ♖xf7 – 15...♔h8 16.♕h3+ – 16.♕xd8+ ♗xd8 17.♖xc1) 15...♕a5+ 16.♔f1 ♕a6+ 17.♔g2 ♕xg5+ 18.♔h1 ♕f4? (18...♘xe4!–+) 19.♖xg7+! ♔xg7 20.♕g1+ ♘g4 21.♕hxg4+ ♕xg4 22.♕xg4+ ♔h6 23.♖g1 1-0, Filipovic-Jurkovic, Zadar 2003.

10.♕xd4 ♘e5 11.♗e2 ♘fg4

No better is 11...c5 12.♕d1 b5 13.f4 ♘c6 14.♗e3!? d5 (14...b4 15.♘d5 ♗b7 16.♗d3) 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♕xd5 ♘b4 17.♕xd8 ♖xd8 18.♗d1 and White was a sound pawn up in Sidorenko-Krapivin, Pardubice 2007.

12.h4 ♗f6 13.♕d1 ♘h6 14.♗e3 ♗d7 15.f4 ♘c6 16.♕d2

White is ready for 17.0-0-0 followed by 18.e5 or 18.♘d5, so Black trades a piece. The bishop is unfortunately his best minor piece.

16...♗xc3 17.♕xc3 f6

Black loses the exchange after moves like 17...♔h8 18.♘e6 and 17...♕e7 18.♘h7.

18.0-0-0 Not really a sacrifice. Black is completely busted. **18...♕e7** 18...fxg5 loses quickly after either 19.♗c4+ ♘f7 (19...♔h8 20.hxg5) 20.♖xg5, or 19.hxg5 ♘f7 20.g6. **19.f5 ♔h8** 19...fxg5 20.♗c4+ (20.♗xg5) 20...♔h8 21.hxg5. **20.♘h3 ♕xe4** 21.♘f4 was a big threat. Now White wins by force though: **21.♗xh6 gxh6 22.♕d2 ♔h7?** White wins after 22...♕xh4 23.♘f4 ♗xf5 24.♖h1 ♕g5 25.♖dg1. While 22...♕e7 23.♘f4 ♘e5

24.♗d3 ♖g8 is tougher, Black suffers after 25.♘d5 ♕f8 26.♖xg8+ ♔xg8 27.♘xc7. **23.♖g4** And now if the queen retreats, 24.♖g6 decides. Trevelyan resigned.

Gajewski Galore

SOS-6, Chapter 13, p.104

In SOS-6 we have sung the praises of Gregorz Gajewski for inventing 9...♖b8. While Black's successes in this line continue Gajewski has moved on to another astonishing Spanish concept – see Chapter 11 in the present volume.

□ **David Pruess**
■ **Vladimir Petkov**
Sautron 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.c3 d6 9.h3 ♖b8 10.d4

In an 'advanced' chess game Topalov opted for the modest 10.d3, when chances were approximately even after 10...♘a5 11.♗c2 c5 12.♘bd2 ♘c6 13.♘f1 ♖e8 14.a3 h6 15.♘g3 ♗e6 16.d4 exd4 17.cxd4 cxd4 18.♘e2 d3 19.♗xd3 ♘e5 in Topalov-Anand, Leon 2007.

10...exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.e5 ♘e4 13.♘bd2 ♗f5 14.♗c2 ♘b4 15.♗b1 c5 16.♘xe4 dxe4 17.♗xe4 ♗xe4 18.♖xe4

18...♕d5

A logical move. Previously the immediate 18...c4 had been played by the creator of the whole system. When 19.♖g4 f5 20.exf6 ♗xf6 21.♗g5 ♘d3 22.♗xf6 ♕xf6 23.b3 ♘f4 reaches a critical position. 24.♘e5 ♖bd8 25.♔h2 c3! was Fedorchuk-Gajewski, Warsaw 2005. Play is rather similar to the present game. In both games the c-pawn plays an important role.

Stronger is 24.bxc4 bxc4 25.♕c2 c3! and now White sacrificed an exchange in Solodovnichenko-Zubarev, Odessa 2007, to get rid of the dangerous c-pawn. Play was equal after 26.♖xf4!? ♕xf4 27.♕xc3 ♖b6 28.♖e1 h6 29.♕c2 ♕f5 30.♕e2 ♕d5 31.♖d1 ♖e6 32.♕c2 ♖c6 33.♕e2.

19.♕e2 c4 20.♖g4 f5 21.exf6 ♗xf6 22.♗g5 ♘d3 23.♗xf6 ♖xf6 24.b3 ♖e6

To prevent White's queen from entering on e7. Although Black keeps chances too after both 24...♖bf8 25.♕e7 ♖6f7 26.♕e4 and 24...♘f4 25.♕e7!? ♖f7 26.♕e5 ♖c8.

25.♕c2 h6

Controlling square g5 in view of 25...♖be8 26.bxc4 bxc4 (or 26...♕xc4 27.♕xc4 bxc4 28.d5 and White remains a pawn up) 27.♖g5! ♘e1! 28.♖xd5 ♘xc2 29.♖b1 and White is clearly better.

26.♖d1

White can try to involve his a1-rook into play with 26.a4 after 26...♖f8 27.axb5 axb5 28.♖a7 White is clearly better placed than in the game. Therefore Black should perhaps prefer 26...h5!? 27.♖g5 (27.♖g3 ♘f4 is complicated although it is true that the pawn is awkwardly placed on h5) 27...♘e1! 28.♘xe1 ♕xg5 29.bxc4 bxc4 30.♕xc4 and with two pawns for the exchange and the pawn on h5 rather than on h6 White is somewhat better.

26...♖f8 27.bxc4 bxc4 28.♖g3 ♖e4 29.♖d2 ♘f4

29...♖xf3 30.♖xf3 (30.gxf3!? ♖e1+ 31.♔h2 ♕xd4) 30...♘e1 31.♕c3 ♘xf3+ 32.♕xf3

♖e1+ 33.♔h2 ♕xf3 34.gxf3 is a draw.

30.♔h2 ♖c8!?

Going for more than the drawish ending after 30...c3 31.♕xc3 ♘e2 32.♕b3 ♕xb3 33.axb3 ♘xg3 34.♔xg3.

31.♖g4 c3! 32.♖d1 ♖e2

33.♖d2 The only move! Black wins after 33.♕c1 c2 34.♖f1 (34.♖g1 ♘d3 35.♕xh6 ♖c7) 34...♘d3 35.♕xh6 ♕d7. **33...♖e4** Repeating the moves. **34.♖d1 ♖e2 35.♖d2 ♖xd2! 36.♘xd2 ♕xd4 37.♘e4 ♕e5 38.g3? ♘d5?!** Black could win on the spot with 38...♘e6 or 38...♘e2 when the threat of ...♘d4 leaves White helpless.

39.♘d2? ♔h8? Undoubtedly in time trouble Black misses the simple 39...♕e2 40.♕f5 ♘e7. **40.♘f3 ♕f6 41.♘h4 ♖b8 42.♘g6+?** The best defence was 42.♖c4!. **42...♔g8** Now Black is winning again. **43.♖c4**

43...♘e3! A lovely way to end the game. **44.fxe3 ♖b2 45.♖c8+ ♔f7 46.♖f8+ ♔e6 47.♘f4+ ♔d7 0-1**

Winning the SOS Prize

SOS-6, Chapter 15, p.117

Young Nikita Vitiugov is one of Russia's rising stars. By employing a SOS in a topical Slav he reaches a slightly better ending against fellow 2600-GM Evgeny Naer. The latter is subtly outplayed and finished off with a tactical shot on the 34th move. A deserving winner wouldn't you say?

□ **Nikita Vitiugov**
■ **Evgeny Naer**
Krasnoyarsk 2007

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 dxc4 5.a4 ♗f5 6.♘e5 ♘bd7 7.♘xc4 ♕c7 8.♕d2

This odd-looking queen move – a real surprise! – in a highly theoretical Slav is designed to kill Black's main strategical idea in this position: the ...e5 advance. In SOS-6 Dorian Rogozenko explained the ins and outs.

8...♘b6

The point of White's previous move is apparent after 8...e5? when 9.dxe5 ♘xe5 10.♕f4! is very awkward for Black.

Rogozenko's main line was 8...e6 9.♕f4 ♕xf4 10.♗xf4 ♘b6 11.♘d6+ ♗xd6 12.♗xd6 when White is slightly better in the resulting ending.

9.♘e3!?

A novelty that is more ambitious than 9.♘xb6 axb6 10.♕f4 ♕xf4 11.♗xf4 with an equal ending.

Previously 9.♘e5 had also been tried. After 9...e6 10.f3 Black can play 10...0-0-0 or 10...♖d8. See SOS-6 for the details.

9...♗g6 10.a5 ♘bd5 11.g3 Rather than setting up a pawn centre with f3 and e4, Vitiugov calmly continues his development by fianchettoing his bishop and castling kingside. **11...e6 12.♗g2 ♘xe3** The alternative is the immediate 12...♗b4. **13.♕xe3 a6** Avoiding 13...♗b4 14.a6. **14.0-0 ♗b4**

15.♕e5!? ♕xe5 White is slightly better after 15...♗d6 16.♕g5. **16.dxe5 ♘d5 17.♗d2 0-0-0 18.e4** White intends to play against the light-squared bishop on g6. **18...♘c7?!** Is White really better after 18...♘xc3 19.♗xc3 ♗xc3 20.bxc3 ♖d3? This looks like an equalizing line for Black. Now White has a pleasant ending. **19.♗e3 ♖d3?!** This is an empty shot, as Vitiugov will demonstrate. **20.♖fc1 h6 21.♗f1 ♖d7 22.f3** Now it is clear that White's strategy of keeping Black's bishop out of play has succeeded. Note that that the doubled e-pawns control important squares. Black has a serious space disadvantage. **22...♔b8 23.♔f2** Over the next few moves Vitiugov calmly improves his pieces. **23...♖hd8** Black controls the only open file on the board, but as there are no squares on which he can enter this is of little significance. **24.♗e2 h5?! 25.h4 f6 26.exf6 gxf6 27.♘a4 e5 28.♘b6!** Gaining control over the d-file, and therefore stronger than 28.♘c5 ♖d6. **28...♖h7** Black cannot keep the rook on the d-file, as 28...♖d6 29.♖c4 ♗d2 30.♗c5 loses the exchange. **29.♖d1 ♖xd1 30.♖xd1** White has made huge progress. He now controls the only open file. His pieces are far more active than Black's, and his pawn structure is also superior. 31.♖d8+ is a major threat. **30...♘e6 31.♘d7+ ♔c8 32.♗c4! ♖e7 33.♘xf6** Also very strong was 33.♗b6. **33...♗xa5**

34.♖d7! A spectacular move. Likewise, the artistic 34.♘g8! ♖e8 35.♖d6 was also sufficient. **34...♖f7 35.♖xf7 ♗xf7 36.♘xh5** Winning a pawn. With two passed pawns on the kingside White is winning. **36...♔d7 37.♘g7! b5 38.♗xe6+ ♗xe6 39.♗c5!?** Or 39.♘xe6. **39...♗b3?! 40.h5 ♗d2 41.♗e3 ♗b4 42.h6 ♗g8 43.f4 exf4 44.gxf4 ♗f8 45.f5 ♗xg7 46.hxg7 ♔e7 47.b4** **1-0**

CHAPTER 2

Ruben Felgaer

Meeting the Caro-Kann with 2.♘e2

Another Short Variation

At first sight it is difficult to understand why White would be interested in playing 2.♘e2 against the Caro-Kann Defence. The shortcomings are clear: the knight blocks the development of the bishop and there is no gain in the centre. However, it is not without reason that this early knight move has been played by numerous masters and grandmasters. One of the founding fathers of this variation is Nigel Short, since he played it several times and obtained fantastic results. Indeed, on second sight, the advantages of 2.♘e2 become evident. The rationale of this move is that if Black plays in the traditional way – that means 3...♗f5 as against the regular Advance Variation – 1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.c5 ♗f5, he will encounter surprising problems after 4.♘g3. This will be analysed in the first game of this article. Consequently, the majority of players chooses 3...c5, which leads to a very interesting Advance Variation that will be analysed extensively in the remainder of this article.

I have tried almost all the alternatives for the main variations against the Caro-Kann Defence. For this reason, when GM Vallejo suggested that I should have a look at the strange 2.♘e2!?, I said to myself: why not? I should say that I was most favourably impressed by this variation because it is poisonous and it is generally not studied by our opponents. So, the chances of obtaining an

advantage, or at least an interesting position, are extremely high.

□ **Ruben Felgaer**
■ **Elizbar Ubilava**
Olite tt 2006

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.♘g3

4...♗d7

My prestigious opponent chooses a safe retreat of the bishop.

● As was mentioned earlier, the analysis of 4...♗g6 is critical to the understanding of the variation: 4...♗g6 5.h4! h6 6.h5 ♗h7 7.e6! (this blocking sac 'à la Rudolf Spielmann' is possible because White saved a tempo by postponing d4. Black suffers problems to complete his development. Such is the problem of this variation that 3...♗f5 followed by 4...♗g6 is not played anymore) 7...fxe6 8.d4

– after 8...♕d6 9.f4! ♘d7 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 0-0-0 12.0-0 ♘gf6 13.b3 the bishop on f8 is in a lousy situation, White's advantage is clear, Bauckloh-Gruss, Germany tt 1993/94.

– 8...e5!? (a modern way of playing. Black returns the pawn in order to develop his pieces properly. In my opinion, this is the only way in which Black has chances to equalize) 9.dxe5 e6 10.♗d3 ♗xd3 11.♕xd3 ♘e7 12.♘d2 ♘d7 13.f4 ♕c7 14.♘f3 c5 15.0-0 0-0-0 16.c4. This is a fighting position, but White's position looks preferable, Richmond-Nelson, Manila ol 1992.

– 8...♘f6 9.♗d3 ♘a6 10.♗xh7 ♖xh7 11.♕d3 ♕d6 12.♕g6+ ♔d7 13.♘c3 ♖d8 14.0-0 ♔c8 15.♖e1 ♘c7 16.♘ce2 ♕d7 17.♘f4. Again Black's bishop on f8 determines the advantage for White, who did not have any problems to achieve victory in the game Rossetto-Luckis, Buenos Aires ch-ARG 1961.

● Another possible retreat is 4...♗e6. Even though this move looks strange, it has its logic. But the main reason to include this game is the strength of the players: 5.d4 g6 6.c3 (playing flexibly) 6...h5 (6...♗g7 7.♗e3 ♘h6 8.♗d3±) 7.♗d3 ♕c8 (7...♗g7 8.0-0 h4 9.♘e2 h3 10.g3 ♗f5 11.♗xf5 gxf5 12.e6! fxe6 13.♘f4 ♕d6 14.♕b3 b6 15.♘g6 ♖h5 16.♗f4± Lukacs) 8.h4 (8.0-0!?±) 8...♘h6 9.♘d2 (intending ♘f3, exploiting the weaknesses of the dark squares) 9...♗g7 10.0-0 c5 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.♗e3 ♗g4 13.♗e2 cxd4 14.cxd4 0-0 15.♖c1 ♘f5 16.♘xf5 ♕xf5 17.♖c5 ♕d7 18.♘g5 ♗xe2 19.♕xe2 f6 20.exf6 ♖xf6 (20...exf6 21.♘h3) 21.♕d3 ♖d8 22.f4!±, Short-Sasikiran, Istanbul ol 2000.

● 4...e6. It does not make any sense to give up this bishop so quickly. White did not have problems to obtain an advantage after 5.♘xf5 exf5 6.d4 ♘d7 7.♗d3 g6 8.♘d2 ♗g7 9.♘f3 ♘f8 10.0-0 ♘e6 11.b3 ♘e7 12.♗a3

0-0 13.c4 in Rowson-T.Johansen, Lyngby 1996.

5.d4 e6 6.c4!

Before Black plays ...c5, in which case he would achieve a reasonable French Defence.

6...b5?!

A compromising move to which I do not see any advantage. However, Black's position was already not simple: 6...♘e7 7.♘c3 ♘g6 (7...dxc4 8.♗xc4 ♘d5 9.0-0±) 8.♗e3± where there are no doubts about White's opening advantage.

7.c5

Obtaining more space.

7...a5

Otherwise White could play a4 and if b4, a5! isolating the pawn. White is just better after 7...f6 8.exf6 ♘xf6 9.♘d2 ♗e7 10.♘f3 0-0 11.♗d3.

8.♗d3 g6 9.h4 h5 10.♘d2 ♘e7 11.♘f3 ♘f5

12.♘e2!

The secret of this position is to know when it is the most appropriate moment to change pieces on f5. Due to the great space advantage of my position, I can manoeuvre without hesitation until I find the ideal position.

12...♘a6 13.♗g5 ♗e7 14.♘f4 ♘c7

14...♗xg5 15.hxg5 ♘xd4 (Ubilava) was an interesting possibility of complicating the game. However, after the counter-sacrifice 16.♘xg6! (Black gets a lot of pawns after 16.♘xd4 ♕xg5 17.♘de2 ♕xe5) and now:

– 16...♘xf3+ 17.♕xf3 ♕xg5 (17...♖g8 18.♖xh5! – this is a winning attack – 18...fxg6 – or 18...♘xc5 19.♖h7 ♘xd3+ 20.♔f1!+– – 19.♗xg6+ ♖xg6 20.♖h8+ ♔e7 21.♖h7+ ♔e8 22.♕f7 mate) 18.♘xh8 ♕xe5+ 19.♗e2 ♕xh8 20.0-0-0±.

– 16...♖g8 17.♖xh5!? ♘xc5 (17...fxg6 18.♗xg6+ ♖xg6 19.♖h8++–) 18.♘f4 ♘xf3+ 19.♕xf3 ♘xd3+ 20.♘xd3 ♕e7 21.♕e3± with absolute control.

15.♕e2 b4 16.a4!

Avoiding counter-attacks on the queenside. If 16.0-0-0 then 16...♘b5.

16...♗c8!

After 16...bxa3 17.♖xa3 ♕b8 18.0-0 the a5 pawn is very weak.

17.♕d2!

A prophylactic move, avoiding an unnecessary exchange of pieces.

17.b3? ♗a6, or also 17.♗xf5? exf5 18.b3 ♘e6, would improve Black's chances.

17...♗a6 18.♗c2! b3

This move sacrifices a pawn without any compensation. However, Black does not have many moves, whereas I could gradually improve my position. For example 18...0-0 19.b3! ♕d7 20.0-0-0± with the idea of breaking with g4.

19.♗xf5!

Now is the proper moment. Instead 19.♗xb3 ♖b8 20.♕c3 ♖b4 is unclear.

19...gxf5 20.♕xa5! ♔d7!?

The flashy 20...♗e2 does not work, because after 21.♗xe7 ♕xe7 22.♕c3 ♗c4 23.♖a3 White is winning.

21.♕d2 ♗b5 22.♕b4 ♕b8 23.♕xb3 ♗c4

Here 23...♗xa4 24.♕xb8 ♖hxb8 25.♗xe7 ♔xe7 26.0-0 ♖xb2 27.♘xh5 would be a simple win.

24.♕c3 ♘b5 25.♕d2

25...♘xd4

The only practical chance of complicating the game. Otherwise White is just winning.

26.♕xd4

26.♘xd4? ♕xe5+ 27.♘fe2 ♗xc5.

26...♕b4+ 27.♕c3 ♗xc5 28.♘d2 ♕b8 29.b3 ♗b4 30.♕e3

30.♕b2 also wins.

30...♗a6 31.♖c1 c5 32.♗f6 d4 33.♕f3 ♗xd2+ 34.♔xd2 ♕b4+ 35.♔d1 ♖hg8 36.♘d5!

When it looked that Black obtained something, this tactical punch puts everything in order.

36...♕a5

36...exd5 37.♕xd5+ ♔c7 38.♖xc5+ wins.

37.♘e7 ♕b6 38.♘xg8 ♖xg8 39.♗g5 ♕b4 40.♗d2 ♕a3 41.♖h3 d3 42.♔e1 ♖g4 43.♕a8 ♖e4+

44.♖e3

There is always time to make the last mistake! See 44.♔f1?? ♕xc1+! and 44.♗e3?? ♕xc1 mate! Now, my opponent resigned without attempting 44...♖xh4 45.g3! ♖h2 46.♖xd3+! ♗xd3 47.♕b7+ ♔e8 48.♕c8+ ♔e7 49.♗g5+ and mates.

□ **Nigel Short**
■ **Anatoly Lein**
Hastings 1979/80

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5

In the remaining games in this article, we will deal with the positions resulting from 3...c5. This move does not lack logic and is indeed the most popular continuation. It should be pointed out that some of the games

we are going to analyse come from another move order in the Advance Variation (1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.♘e2), but the majority comes from 2.♘e2. Those who think that this is cheap propaganda could check their database!

4.d4

I confess that on several occasions I was tempted to play 4.b4 and only due to 4...♘c6! I never played it.

4...e6?!

The aim is to transpose to a French Defence, but having wasted a tempo with the pawn (1...c6 and 3...c5) it leaves White with good chances. The variation we will analyse profusely below is 4...♘c6 5.c3.

5.♘d2 ♘c6 6.♘f3 ♘ge7

Perhaps 6...cxd4!?.

7.c3

7...♗d7

7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♘f5 looks better than the game. However, what follows is not very helpful for Black: 9.a3! ♕b6 10.g4! ♘fe7 11.♘f4 ♘a5 12.♖b1 ♘b3 13.♗e3 ♗d7 14.♗d3 ♖c8 15.♗c2 ♘a5 16.♔f1! ♘c4 17.♗c1 ♗b5 18.♔g2 (White's position looks very good and we could leave this game here, but we will continue due to the strength of the player conducting the white pieces) 18...♕c7 19.♗d3 ♗d7 20.b3 ♘a5 21.♗d2 ♕b6 22.♘h5 (White improves more and more...) 22...♗b5 23.♗b4 ♗xd3 24.♕xd3 ♘ac6 25.♗c5 ♕a6 26.♕e3 b6 27.♗d6 ♘g6 28.♗xf8 ♔xf8 29.♖hc1 ♕xa3 30.♖c3 ♕e7 31.♖bc1 ♕d7 32.b4 ♘ge7 33.♘f6! (punching time) 33...♕d8 (33...gxf6 34.♕h6+ ♔e8 35.exf6 ♘g6 36.b5±) 34.b5 ♘a5? 35.♖xc8 ♘xc8 36.♖xc8! followed by the lethal check on a3, Kasparov-Kayumov, Moscow 1976.

8.h4! cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘f5 10.a3 h5 11.g3

The space advantage, as in Kasparov's example, gives White a more than comfortable position.

11...♕b6 12.♗h3 ♘a5 13.b4 ♘c4 14.♗xf5 exf5 15.♘f4 ♗e6 16.0-0 ♗e7 17.♘d3! a5 18.♗g5

A thematic exchange of bishops to weaken the dark squares.

18...♗xg5

19.bxa5!

An important intermediate move in view of 19.♘xg5 ♕xd4.

19...♖xa5 20.♖b1 ♕a7 21.♘xg5 b6

21...♕xd4? 22.♖xb7±.

22.♘f4 ♔d7?

Leaving the king exposed, which with Short's precise play is a decisive factor. Instead 22...♖h6 23.♘xh5 ♔f8 looks more tenacious.

23.♘xh5 ♖xa3 24.♘xg7 ♕a5 25.♘h5 ♘d2 26.♘f6+ ♔e7

27.♖c1! ♘c4

The only move as 27...♘xf1 28.♖c7+ ♔f8 29.♕c1! gives White an irresistible attack, for example 29...♘xg3 30.♘xe6+ fxe6 31.♖c8+ ♔f7 32.♕c7+ ♔g6 33.♖g8+ ♖xg8 34.♕h7 mate.

28.♘h3! b5 29.♘f4 b4 30.♖xc4!? dxc4 31.d5 ♕c5 32.dxe6 ♖xg3+ 33.♔h2 ♖d3 34.♘xd3 cxd3 35.f4! ♕c2+ 36.♕xc2 dxc2 37.♘d5+ ♔xe6 38.♘xb4 ♖xh4+ 39.♔g3 ♖g4+ 40.♔f3 f6 41.exf6 ♖h4 42.♘xc2 ♖h3+ 43.♔e2 1-0

□ **Nigel Short**
■ **Boris Gulko**
Horgen 1995

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5 4.d4 ♘c6 5.c3 ♗f5 6.dxc5!

Another critical move in this variation. White is prepared to give up pawn e5, in exchange for rapid mobilization of his forces through ♘d4, attacking the black bishop.

Note that 6.♘g3 ♗g6 7.h4 is no longer useful after 7...e6 8.h5 ♗xb1 9.♖xb1 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♕b6∓.

6...e6

After this game 6...e6 gained a bad reputation and Black preferred the immediate capture on e5.

6...♘xe5!? will be analysed in Felgaer-Annaberdiev below.

7.b4!

White keeps looking for an unbalanced and dynamic position.

7...a5

Taking the pawn on e5 allows White to gain a strong initiative, as I managed to show in a recent game:

7...♘xe5 8.♘d4 ♘e7 9.♗b5+! (9.♗f4 f6! 10.♗b5+ ♔f7 11.0-0± was also successful in Kabanov-Riazantsev, Tomsk 2006, but the immediate check looks stronger) 9...♘d7 (9...♘5c6 10.0-0 a6 11.♗a4±) 10.0-0 a6 11.♗a4! (it is easy to observe that Black has serious problems to complete his development) 11...♖c8 12.♖e1 h6 (12...♗xb1 does not relieve the position: 13.♖xb1 ♘c6 14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.♕xd5 ♗e7 16.♕xe6+−) 13.♘d2 (13.♘xf5 ♘xf5 14.♕xd5+− was simple) 13...♕c7 (13...♗g6 14.♖xe6! fxe6 15.♘xe6 capturing the queen!) 14.c4! ♗g6 15.♗b2 dxc4 16.♘xc4 ♘c6 17.♘xe6! fxe6 18.♖xe6+ ♔f7 19.♕f3+ ♔xe6 20.♖c1+ ♘de5 21.♘xe5 ♘xe5 22.♗xe5 ♕xe5 23.♗b3+, 1-0 Felgaer-Arbuello, Avellaneda 2007.

8.♘d4! axb4 9.cxb4 ♕c7

As Ftacnik analyses, other moves do not lead to happiness either:

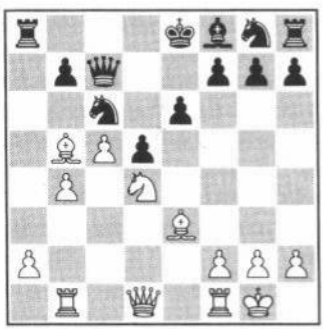
- 9...♗xb1 10.♖xb1 ♕h4 (or 10...♘xe5 11.♗b5+ ♘d7 12.♕e2) 11.♗e3 ♖a3 12.♗d3! ♘xe5 (12...♘xd4 13.♗xd4 ♖xa2 14.♖a1!

♖xa1 15.♕xa1 ♗e7 16.♕a4+ ♔d8 17.♕a8+ ♔c7 18.b5!!+– ♕xd4 19.b6+ ♔c6 20.♕e8+ ♔xc5 21.♕b5 mate, a nice variation) 13.♗b5+ ♘d7 14.0-0 and the advantage in development gives a clear advantage to White
– 9...♘xb4? 10.♗b5+ ♔e7 11.♕b3 wins.
– 9...♘xe5 10.♗b5+ ♘d7 11.♘xf5 exf5 12.♕xd5 is also hopeless for Black.

10.♗b5 ♗xb1

Probably not the most fortunate exchange. However, I insist that White is anyway more than happy with his opening.
Better was 10...♕xe5+ 11.♗e3 ♘e7 12.0-0 ♕c7 13.♘c3 with a great advantage in development.

11.♖xb1 ♕xe5+ 12.♗e3 ♕c7 13.0-0



13...♗e7

Any move that does not develop is out of contact with reality. For example 13...♖xa2 14.♗a4! e5 (14...♗e7 15.b5!+–) 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.♕b3 ♖xa4 17.♕xa4 ♕c8 18.b5+–. Or 13...♘e7 14.♗a4 with the idea of b5.

14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.b5

With the idea of opening the position with Black's king in the middle. Black is helpless.

15...cxb5 Or 15...♗xc5 16.bxc6 ♗xd4 17.♕xd4 ♘f6 18.♖b7! ♕xc6 19.♕b4 ♘d7 20.♖c1 ♕a6 21.♖cc7 winning. **16.♘xb5 ♕c6 17.♘d4 ♕c8** 17...♕xc5 18.♘xe6+–. **18.♕b3 ♘f6 19.♕b5+ ♔f8** 19...♕d7 20.c6 ♕c7 21.♕b7+–. **20.♘c6 ♘e4 21.♘xe7 ♔xe7 22.♕b2 ♖d8** 22...f6 23.f3 ♘g5 24.♗xg5 ♕xc5+ 25.♔h1 fxg5 26.♕xg7++–. **23.♕xg7 ♖xa2 24.♖fc1 ♖g8 25.♕e5 f6 26.♕h5 ♖g7 27.c6 ♔d6 28.c7 ♖a8** Or 28...♖xc7 29.♖b6+ ♔d7 30.♕f7+ ♔d8 31.♕g8+ ♔d7 32.♕xe6+ winning. **29.♗f4+ e5 30.♗xe5+! fxe5 31.♕h6+ 1-0**

After this game many players looked at 2.♘e2 with different eyes.

□ **Jesus de la Villa Garcia**
■ **Husein Nezad**
Andorra 2004

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5 4.d4 ♘c6 5.c3 cxd4

Having seen the demolishing victory of Short against Gulko, it is logical to ask oneself why not to exchange pawns on d4 and avoid everything that happened in that game. However, this has the inconvenience of allowing the development of White's queen's knight to c3. For this reason White has the chance to obtain an advantage in more tranquil positions.

6.cxd4 ♗f5 7.♘bc3 e6

8.♗e3!?

This move was played only a few times and is my recommendation. Even though only the future can determine how good it is, I

consider that there are good perspectives of achieving an advantage.

8.♘g3 is the conventional move with which high level games were played. For example: 8...♗g6 9.♗b5 (9.h4) 9...♘e7 10.♗g5 ♖c8 (10...h6 11.♗xe7 ♗xe7 12.0-0 ½-½ Movsesian-Sakaev, Istanbul Ech 2003) 11.0-0 h6 12.♗h4 a6 13.♗xc6+ ♖xc6 14.f4 ♕d7 15.♗xe7 ♗xe7 16.f5 exf5 17.♕f3 unclear, Van den Doel-Magem Badals, Mondariz 2000.

8...♘ge7

Instead 8...♘b4 leads to an amusing line: 9.♘g3! ♘c2+ 10.♔d2 ♗g6 (10...♘xa1?? 11.♕a4+ ♔e7 12.♕b4+ ♔d7 13.♕xb7+ ♔e8 14.♗b5++—) 11.♗b5+ ♔e7

12.f4!? (12.♖c1 ♘xe3 13.♔xe3 f6 unclear) 12...♘xa1 13.f5 ♗xf5 14.♘xf5+ exf5 15.♕f3 with a powerful attack.

9.♘f4!

Now the idea of 8.♗e3 is evident. White is still flexible where to place the knight; here it is clear that f4 is the most adequate square.

9...h6 10.♖c1 ♗h7

After 10...♘g6 11.g4! is very strong: 11...♗e4 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♘xg6 ♗b4+ 14.♔e2 fxg6 15.♗g2 with a clear advantage. Likewise, 10...a6, avoiding a future ♗b5, also has its problems: 11.♗e2 ♗h7 12.♗h5! ♕d7 13.♘a4, with a very good position for White.

11.g4

Avoiding ♘f5, but this move is a bit strange. 11.♗b5!?, with a slight edge, is the improvement I would suggest. White has an interesting opening position, where he could put pressure due to his space advantage: 11...a6 (11...♘f5 12.♗xc6+ bxc6 13.0-0± followed by ♘a4, exploiting the black weakness on c6) 12.♗a4 b5 (this only weakens Black's position) 13.♗b3 (an alternative is 13.♗c2) 13...♖c8 14.0-0 ♘f5 15.a4 b4 16.♘cxd5!? exd5 17.♗xd5 ♘ce7 18.♗c4 with strong compensation for the sacrificed material.

11...♘g6 12.♘h5

12...♘gxe5! 13.dxe5 d4 14.♗xd4 ♕xd4 15.♕xd4 ♘xd4 16.♗g2 0-0-0

With unclear play in a complex ending that in the end was won by White.

□ **Ruben Felgaer**
■ **Meilis Annaberdiev**
Turin Olympiad 2006

1.e4 c6

This game was played in the Turin Olympiad. While I was playing on first board of the Argentine team, in the neighbouring match England was playing Peru. When I saw Short away from his board I could not resist and told him that I was playing his variation. Regrettably the game did not finish with the desired result; maybe the fact that the father of this variation was watching my game was too much pressure for me!

2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5 4.d4 ♘c6 5.c3 ♗f5 6.dxc5 ♘xe5!?

The immediate capture on e5, as mentioned earlier, has a good reputation. This is because Black achieves active positions (several times at the cost of a pawn), which is the opposite situation of the one observed after 6...e6. However, I think that White, with precise play, can achieve interesting and, in several cases, advantageous positions.

7.♘d4 ♗d7

Controlling the check on b5, but at the same time interfering with the defence of the queen of the d5 pawn. This situation is exploited by White with his following move.

8.♕h5!

Ambitious and challenging the rule that we are taught as kids: do not expose the queen in the opening. However, I have seen this being played for free and here we could say that a pawn is a pawn!

8.♗e2 e6 9.b4 had been played with success by a very young Short. However, I think Black did not have any trouble in the opening after 9...♘f6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♗e3 0-0 12.♘d2 ♕c7 13.f4 ♘g6 14.♕e1 b6! 15.♘4b3 ♗a4 unclear, Short-Speelman, Chester ch-GBR 1979.

8...♘c6

This natural retreat happened to be a novelty. However, I was prepared for this move. Alternatives are:

– 8...♘g6 9.♕xd5 ♕c8 (9...e5? 10.♗c4±; 9...♕c7?! 10.♗b5±) 10.♗b5 (10.b4!? ♘f6 11.♕b3 e5 12.♗c4!? (Vukovic) is an interesting sac, but it is unnecessary) 10...♗xb5 11.♘xb5 ♘f6 12.♕f3 a6 (12...♘e5? 13.♕e2 ♕xc5? 14.b4+–) 13.♘d4 e5?! (13...♘e5± intending ...♕c5) 14.♘f5± with an excellent position in the game Vukovic-Markovic, Jahorina tt 2001 (the comments are by Vukovic in *Informator* 82).

– 8...♕c7?! 9.♘b5 ♕b8 10.♗f4 ♘d3+ 11.♗xd3 ♕xf4 12.♘d2 ♘f6 13.♕e2 a6?? (13...e6 14.b4 ♗e7 15.♘f3±) 14.♘d6+ 1-0 Felgaer-Cuartas, Barcelona (rapid) 2006.

– 8...♕b8!? is an option to be investigated.

9.♕xd5 ♘f6

10.♕g5!

This looks strange, but it is important to control e5 and the queen from g5 (or g3) will hinder Black's development.

Indeed, 10.♕b3 e5 11.♘xc6 (11.♗c4 ♘a5!) 11...♗xc6 is preferable for Black.

10...e5

If 10...h6 11.♕g3 then none of Black's moves offer anything decent:

– 11...e6 12.♘b5 ♖c8 13.♘d6+ ♗xd6 14.cxd6±.

– 11...e5 12.♘xc6 ♗xc6 13.♕xe5+ ♗e7 14.♗c4 ♗xg2?! 15.♖g1 ♗d5 16.♘a3! ♔f8 17.♗e3±.

– 11...♘xd4 12.cxd4 ♗c6 13.♗e3 ♕a5+ 14.♘d2 ♘e4 (14...e6 15.♗e2 ♘e4 16.♕e5 b6? 17.♗f3) 15.♕e5 ♖d8 16.f3 ♘xd2 17.♗xd2 ♕a4 18.♗c3± Black does not have compensation for the pawn.

11.♘xc6 ♗xc6

12.♗c4?

An important mistake. I had analysed taking on e5 and inexplicably I moved the bishop first. The truth is that after the capture of the second pawn, Black has an advantage in development, but the time he needs to regain one of the pawns will be used by White to settle his forces and maintain the advantage of a pawn.

12.♕xe5+! ♗e7 13.♗c4:

– 13...♗xg2? 14.♖g1 ♗d5 15.♘a3! ♔f8 (15...0-0 16.♗h6) 16.♗e3 with a huge advantage.

– 13...0-0 14.0-0 ♘d7 (14...♖e8 15.♗e3 ♘d7 16.♕h5 g6 17.♗xf7+!+–) 15.♕g3 ♘xc5 16.♗h6 ♗f6 17.♘d2 b5 18.♗e2 ♖e8 19.♗e3±, there is no full compensation for the pawn.

12...♕c7 13.b4 ♗e7 14.0-0

14.♕xg7 is very dangerous because of 14...0-0-0 15.♗xf7 ♕d7! 16.0-0? ♖hg8!.

14...0-0 15.♘d2 ♖ad8 16.♘b3 b6!

Destroying my pawn structure on the queenside, after which the position is complex. After several manoeuvres my opponent managed to get the full point. Nevertheless, I do not have any reason to blame 2.♘e2 for the result of this game. In case I had played 12.♕xe5 the opening would have been a success.

□ **Nigel Short**
■ **Alexey Dreev**
Hyderabad FIDE World Cup final 2002

1.e4 c6 2.♘e2 d5 3.e5 c5 4.d4 ♘c6 5.c3 ♗g4!?

A provocative move. Knowing that the development of the bishop to f5 is not without problems, Black looks for new horizons on g4.

6.♗e3

There are plenty of alternatives.

● 6.h3 ♗xe2 7.♗xe2 e6 (7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♕b6 seems annoying for White, but the capture of the pawn is dangerous because of the lack of development: 9.♗e3 ♕xb2 10.♘d2 ♕b6 11.♖b1 ♕c7 12.♕b3 ♖b8 13.e6! – playing with great energy – 13...fxe6 14.0-0 ♘f6 15.♖fc1 ♘d7 16.♗g4 ♔f7 17.♖e1 ♘d8 18.♘f3± and the black position was not enviable in Kadar-Nestrovic, Harkany 1997) 8.0-0 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♘ge7 10.♘c3 ♘f5 11.♗e3 ♗e7 with an even game.

● 6.f3 and now:

– 6...♗d7 7.e6?! (this looks too adventurous, but taking into account that White managed to defeat a former World Champion, we could show a few more moves. 7.♘f4 is unclear) 7...♗xe6 8.dxc5 ♘f6 9.b4 g6 10.♗f4 ♗g7 11.♘d4 0-0 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♗e5 ♗h6 14.♗d3 ♘d7 15.♗d4 f6 16.0-0 ♗f7 17.a4 e5 and Black was OK, although White won in Barendregt-Botvinnik, Amsterdam 1966.

– 6...♗f5!. This is Black's idea. Placing the bishop on f5 when the f-pawn has moved to f3 will create problems for White: 7.dxc5 e6 (7...♘xe5!? 8.♘d4 ♗d7 – note that White cannot play ♕h5 in this line – 9.f4 ♘c6 10.♗e3∞ ♘f6 11.♘d2 e6 and Black has a good position, similar to the one seen in Short-Speelman – 8.b4 a5 9.♘d4 axb4 10.cxb4?? (10.♗b5 ♕a5!∞) 10...♕h4+!–+, again shows the disadvantages of having the pawn on f3.

● 6.♕b3!? was my attempt to improve White's game: 6...♗xe2! (my opponent chooses the safest option. 6...♕b6 7.dxc5! ♕xb3 8.axb3 ♘xe5 9.♘d4 ♘c6 10.b4! e5 11.♘xc6 bxc6 12.♘d2 ♘f6 13.♘b3 followed by ♘a5 with excellent prospects for White) 7.♗xe2 ♕d7 8.♗e3 e6 (8...cxd4 9.cxd4 e6 10.♘c3±) 9.0-0 (9.dxc5 ♘xe5 10.♘d2 ♘f6 11.f4 ♘c6 12.0-0 ♗e7 could be investigated, but, in principle, Black does not have any problems):

9...♘ge7! (the fact that Black did not exchange pawns on d4 is critical to avoid the development of the knight via c3) 10.♘d2 ♘f5 11.♘f3 ♗e7 (it could be said that Black passed the test of the opening without inconvenience) 12.g4?! (objectively a risky and bad move. On the other hand, this is the type of thing one has to do to fight for the full point) 12...♘xe3 13.fxe3 c4? (returning the favour, Black would have a perfect position after 13...f6!) 14.♕c2 f6 15.exf6 gxf6 16.♔h1 0-0-0 17.b3 cxb3 (not 17...h5 18.gxh5 ♖xh5 19.♘e5! ♖xh2+ 20.♔xh2 ♖h8+ 21.♔g2 fxe5 22.♕g6! followed by ♗g4, winning) 18.axb3 ♕c7 19.b4! (sacrificing a pawn in exchange for a strong initiative) 19...♘xb4 20.♕a4 ♘c6 21.♖fb1.

Now the attack on the open a- and b-files is annoying. The game continued 21...♖d6 (21...h5 22.♗a6!) 22.♗b5 (22.c4!) 22...♖g8 23.g5! h6? 24.gxh6 ♖h8 25.♗xc6 ♖xc6 26.♕xa7 ♖xh6 27.♖g1! (playing on the whole board) 27...♖xc3?! 28.♕a8+ ♔d7 29.♖gb1! (the right rook! Not 29.♖ab1? ♖c2 30.♖xb7 ♖cxh2+ 31.♘xh2 ♖xh2 mate) 29...♔d6 30.♖xb7 ♖c1+ 31.♖xc1 ♕xc1+ 32.♘g1+− ♖xh2+ 33.♔xh2 ♕c2+ 34.♔g3 ♕g6+ 35.♔f2 ♕f5+ 36.♔e1 1-0 Felgaer-Houska, Gibraltar 2007.

6...♕b6 7.♕d2 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♗xe2!

After 8...e6 9.♘g3 the bishop on g4 would be in an uncomfortable position.

9.♗xe2 e6 10.♘c3 ♘ge7

10...♗b4!? deserves to be tried by Black.

11.♘a4!?

Leading to an ending in which White has a space advantage and certain pressure. On the other hand, Black's position has no weaknesses. Hence, his position is solid.

11...♕b4 12.♕xb4 ♘xb4 13.♔d2

13.0-0 ♘f5 14.♗b5+ ♘c6 15.♖ac1± deserves attention (Lukacs).

13...♘f5

14.a3?

As pointed out by Lukacs, this move could be considered a waste of a tempo. More precise seems 14.♗b5+ ♘c6 15.♖ac1 ♗b4+ 16.♔e2 ♖c8 17.♗xc6+ bxc6 18.♖c2 ♔d7 19.♖hc1± with pressure on the squares c6 and c5 (Lukacs).

14...♘c6 15.♗b5 ♗e7 16.♖ac1 ♔d7

Now the game seems equal.

17.♔d3 ♖hc8 18.g4 ♘xe3 19.fxe3 ♖c7 20.♖hf1 ♖f8 21.e4 dxe4+ 22.♔xe4 ♔c8 23.♗xc6 ♖xc6 24.♖xc6+ bxc6 25.b4 ♔b7 26.♔d3

26...f6!

Getting rid of the weakness on f7, when the game leads to a draw.

27.exf6 ♖xf6 28.♖xf6 gxf6 29.♔c4 f5 30.gxf5 exf5 31.♘c3 ♔c7 32.d5 f4 33.dxc6 ♔xc6 34.♘e4 ♗h4 35.a4 ♗e1 36.♘g5 h5 37.♘f3 ♗f2 38.♘e5+ ♔d6 39.♘f3 ♔c6 40.h3 ♗e3

Draw.

As we have seen, the variation with 5...♗g4 seems to be a solid option for Black. Nevertheless, the game shows that White has chances to achieve a certain advantage.

To conclude, I hope the reader finds in 2.♘e2 a new tool to fight against the Caro-Kann and to achieve interesting and amusing positions. Those who have applied the recipes of this series before will know that the surprise factor is very important. It is even better when the variation is more poisonous than it would seem at first sight.

CHAPTER 3

Dimitri Reinderman

The Meszaros Variation of the Sicilian

Is 5...♖b8 a useful move?

Recently I told a friend I was working on an article for SOS. I put up the position after 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 and explained to him that the subject started with a black move in this position. Guess which move?

He thought and tried 5...♕a5. Nope. 5...♕b6? Nope. 5...h6? Nope. After some more thought he gave up. When he heard the answer, he explained that he did see the move was legal and had considered it, but just couldn't see any sense in playing that move. And I understood that, for who would guess that 5...♖b8 is a good move?

The concept behind the rook move was devised by Hungarian IM András Mészáros. In 2006 Meszaros published a book called *Traps in the Opening*, which includes a chapter on the Meszaros Variation.

It all started in 1992 when Meszaros wondered if Black would have a good waiting move after 5.♘c3 in the Sicilian. He wanted to be able to react flexibly on whatever set-up White would play, and eventually decided that 5...♖b8 was the best waiting move.

Since 1992 he played a lot of games with it, scoring according to his rating, which is a decent result with black. As Meszaros is clearly the biggest supporter of 5...♖b8 naming it the Meszaros Variation is justified, although grandmaster Jacob Murey also

deserves to be mentioned, scoring three wins and two draws with the rook move.
OK, so these (and some other players) have scored well with 5...♖b8, but the move does not really develop the black position, right? Yes, that is true, and there are a few other disadvantages connected to the move:
– It doesn't prevent White from playing e5 (after taking on c6).
– ♗f4 can come with tempo.
– a7 is no longer protected by the rook.
– Castling queenside is no longer an option.
This final point is especially relevant in the ♗g5-variation, where in similar positions (after ♗xf6, gxf6) the king often goes to the queenside.

However, there are advantages too:
– After ♘xc6 bxc6 the rook becomes active on the semi-open b-file, eyeing b2.
– The black bishop can still go to b4 or c5 after a subsequent ...e6 or ...e5.
– Black might be able to play ...d5 in one go.
– If White is able to play ♘c7+, it doesn't win the rook.

An important psychological advantage – next to the surprise element – is that you can transpose to other Sicilian variations like the Sveshnikov, the Scheveningen, the Dragon, the Classical or the ...♕b6-variation. (Although you have always made the slight concession of having played an early ...♖b8.) You may be able to catch many an opponent on the wrong foot in this way.
Be aware this can work the other way round too: if you transpose to another Sicilian variation and get a good version of it, but are unfamiliar with that variation, you might not play it well. So it is very useful to have a broad knowledge of the Sicilian when playing 5...♖b8.

Enough theoretical talk about the move, let's look at the practice of 5...♖b8. Below you'll find three games of Meszaros and two of Murey, with respectively 6.♗e2, 6.♗g5, 6.♘xc6, 6.♗c4 and 6.♗e3. In the first game I also look at irregular replies on move six. Most of the analyses are mine, though of course I also borrowed some from Meszaros' article.

After finishing this article, I tried 5...♖b8 against strong IM Jan Sprenger in the Dutch team competition. After 6.♗e3 g6 7.♗c4 (he had used 23 minutes already by now) 7...♗g7 8.f3 0-0 9.♕d2 d6 10.0-0-0 ♗d7 we had transposed to the Chinese Dragon. However, normally he does not play ♗c4 against the Dragon, and he admitted afterwards that not being familiar with it was a disadvantage for him. I made an easy draw with black.

6.♗e2 and others

□ **Zigurds Lanka**
■ **Andras Meszaros**
Passau 1996

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♖b8 6.♗e2

This is by far the most common reply to 5...♖b8. Meszaros thinks it's dubious, and it's true that Black has good chances to equalize after 6.♗e2. Less common are:
● 6.g3 is a solid move. Black can transpose to the Scheveningen or the Dragon, but 6...e5 7.♘de2 ♗c5 8.♗g2 a6 9.0-0 d6 is a playable alternative.
● 6.f3 is an attempt to reach the English Attack, but 6...e5 7.♘b3 ♗b4 is fine for Black.
● 6.f4 ♕b6 7.♘b3 (7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘xd5 cxd5 10.♕xd5 e6 11.♕f3 ♗c5 and Black has good compensation) 7...d6 leads to a normal Sicilian position.
● 6.♗f4 d6 (also good is 6...e5!? 7.♘xc6

bxc6 8.♗xe5 ♖xb2 with equality) 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 and now Black should not play 8...♘d5?! 9.♘xd5 cxd5 10.♕xd5 e6 11.♗b5+ ♗d7 12.♗xd7+ ♕xd7 13.♕d2 d5 14.c3± as in Szurovsky-Meszaros, Miskolc 1996, but 8...♘g4 9.exd6 e5 with equal chances.

● 6.g4 can be taken: 6...♘xg4 7.♘xc6 dxc6 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 gives white some compensation for the pawn, but Black is at least equal.

● 6.a4, 6.a3, 6.h3, 6.♘b3 or maybe even 6.♖g1 are other possibilities for White, but they're unlikely to be critical for the evaluation of the Meszaros Variation.

6...e5

In the main lines of the Sveshnikov, Black almost always plays ...♖b8, while White normally puts his bishop on a more active square than e2. So it makes sense to transpose to the Sveshnikov now. Of course you can transpose to variations like the Scheveningen or the Dragon too, having avoided the Keres or Yugoslav Attack. And if you don't want any transposition at all, you can try 6...d5, since the normal reply to it (7.♗b5) is not so effective anymore. White is only a little better after 6...d5 7.exd5 ♘xd5 8.♘db5 ♘xc3 9.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 10.♘xc3 ♗f5 11.♗f4 e5 12.0-0-0+ ♔e8 13.♗e3 or 7.♗f4 e5 8.exd5 exf4 9.dxc6.

7.♘db5

All other moves are OK for Black: 7.♘b3 ♗b4, 7.♘f3 ♗b4 and 7.♘f5 d5.

7...d6 8.♗g5

If White plays 8.♘d5 ♘xd5 9.exd5 ♘e7, we get a variation where ♗e2 is more useful than ...♖b8. However, that is a general observation. More concretely, 10.c3 a6 11.♕a4, which is known to be very strong with the rook on a8, now just loses a piece. So White should play 10.c4 a6 11.♘c3 and now Black can choose between 11...♘f5 and 11...♘g6. In the 'normal' variation (without ♖b8 and ♗e2 included) theory thinks the latter equalises and the former is better for White. However, that is if White moves his bishop to d3! So the position is interesting and probably only a little better for White.

8...a6 9.♘a3 b5

10.♗xf6

The alternative is 10.♘d5, after which Black can try two moves:

– 10...♗e7 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.c3 0-0 13.♘c2 transposes to a regular Sveshnikov where White has played the modest ♗e2. In his *The Sveshnikov Reloaded* Rogozenko writes that this gives Black 'relatively easy equality', but 'often general understanding prevails over precise theoretical knowledge'.

– 10...♕a5+ 11.♗d2 ♕d8 (11...♕a4!? is interesting) 12.♘xf6+ (12.♗g5 repeats moves; 12.c4 ♘xe4 13.cxb5 ♗e6 14.♗c4 axb5 15.♘xb5 ♖xb5 16.♗xb5 ♗xd5 looks good for Black) 12...♕xf6 13.c3 (13.0-0 ♘d4 14.♗d3 ♕g6 15.♔h1 ♗e7 16.c3 ♘e6 is about equal) 13...♗e6 14.0-0 ♗e7 15.♘c2 0-0 16.♘e3 with a tiny advantage for White.

10...♕xf6

This is possible now and perhaps advisable if you're not familiar with the type of position after 10...gxf6 11.♘d5 f5 12.exf5 ♗xf5 13.c3 ♗g7 14.♘c2 0-0 15.0-0 ♗e6 – Sveshnikov players would love to get this position with black though.

11.♘d5 ♕g6

Here 11...♕d8 followed by ...g6, ...♗g7, ...0-0 and ...f5 is a decent alternative.

12.♗f3

White actually doesn't need to defend e4: after 12.0-0 ♕xe4 13.c4 (13.♗f3 ♕d4) 13...♘d4 14.♗d3 ♕g4 15.cxb5 ♕xd1 16.♖fxd1 axb5 17.♘xb5 ♗b7 18.♘dc7+ ♔d8 19.♘xd4 ♔xc7 20.♘b5+ he has the initiative.

12...♘d4 13.0-0

Here 13.♘c7+ ♔d8 14.♘d5 ♗e6 15.♘e3 followed by c3 might give some advantage, although my computer prefers Black here.

13...♗e6?

Black should have played 13...♗b7.

14.♘c7+

Now White collects a pawn, for which Black doesn't have enough compensation.

14...♔d7 15.♘xa6 ♖b6 16.♘b4 ♗e7 17.c3 ♘xf3+ 18.♕xf3 ♖hb8 19.♘ac2

19...d5?

Black tries to complicate the game, but objectively this is wrong. Though it's hard to sit and wait, I think the best chance would be to play for an endgame where the bishops give some drawing chances.

20.exd5 ♗g4 21.♕g3 ♕h5 22.♘c6 ♗d6 23.♘xb8+ ♗xb8 24.d6 ♖xd6 25.f3 ♗f5 26.♕xe5 ♔c8 27.♘e3 ♖e6 28.♕c5+ ♔b7 29.♕xb5+ ♔c8 30.f4?

Correct was 30.♕c5+ ♔b7 31.♕d5+ ♔c8 32.♘xf5 ♕xh2+ 33.♔f2 ♗a7+ 34.♘d4 and wins.

30...♗a7

Winning back a piece. However, Black will still be behind in material and position.

31.♖ae1 ♖xe3 32.♔h1 ♖e6 33.♖xe6 fxe6 34.♕c6+ ♔b8 35.♕d6+ ♔b7 36.♕d7+ ♔a8 37.♖d1

Now Black loses heavy material or is mated.

37...♕h4

He prefers a quick end.

38.♕c8+ ♗b8 39.♕c6+ 1-0

6.♗g5

□ **Bela Molnar**
■ **Jacob Murey**
Pula 2002

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♖b8 6.♗g5

6.♗g5 is a popular move against 5...d6, so it's a logical choice against 5...♖b8 too. Now Black can transpose to the Classical (Richter-Rauzer) Attack with 6...d6, but in that variation ♖b8 is almost never played: the rook is normally either at a8 or c8. Transposing to the Sveshnikov or the Dragon is also unwise.

Possible and not bad is 6...e6!?, since 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♕a5 is good for Black. White should play 7.♗e2 or 7.♕d2, with some advantage.

6...♕a5

6...♕b6 will give a similar structure after 7.♘b3 e6 8.♗xf6 gxf6.

7.♗xf6 gxf6

We should compare this position with the one after 5...d6 6.♗g5 ♕a5 7.♗xf6 gxf6. In that position White often plays 8.♘b3 ♕g5 9.♘d5, but with the rook on b8 Black doesn't have to be afraid of ♘c7+ anymore. Another

common move in that position, 8.♗b5, will now only hit thin air. So although ...d6 is in general more useful in this position, the move 5...♖b8 does have some specific advantages. If you want to play this variation, an important thing to know is that Black often offers to trade queens (and White tends to avoid that). Without queens the position of the black king in the centre is not a problem anymore. Another issue in this position is: will the dark-squared bishop become active, or passive?

8.♘f5

Other moves:

– 8.♘b3 ♕g5 9.g3 (9.♘d5 e6 10.♘c7+ ♔d8 11.♘b5 ♕e5∓) 9...d6 10.♗g2 f5 followed by ...♗g7.

– 8.♕d2 ♘xd4 9.♕xd4 ♗h6 10.g3 (10.♗e2 ♗f4 11.0-0 ♗e5=) 10...b6 followed by ♕c5 should not worry Black.

– 8.♗e2 is the most sensible move. For example: 8...♖g8 9.0-0 d6 10.♘d5 ♗h3 11.♗f3 ♘e5 12.♘e3 ♗h6 13.♘df5 ♗xe3 14.♘xe3 ♕d2! 15.♔h1 ♕xd1 16.♗xd1 ♗d7 17.f4 ♘c6 18.♘d5 ♖c8 19.c3 which is known to be good for White from the game Ebeling-Krogius, Jyväskylä 1993. (Via a regular Rauzer move order).

In our move order – so with the rook on b8 – 18...f5 looks like an equalizer. I feel that White should be able to get some advantage after 6...♕a5, but it's not easy to prove.

8...d6 9.♗d3 b5

After 9...e6 10.♘e3 ♗h6 11.♘c4 the pawn on d6 will drop.

10.0-0 b4 11.♘e2 e6 12.♘e3 ♗h6 13.♘c4 ♕c5

Now compared to the previous comment White doesn't have ♘a4, so pawn d6 is safely defended. Chances are about equal here.

14.a3 a5 15.axb4 ♖xb4 16.b3 a4 17.♖xa4 ♖xa4 18.bxa4 ♔e7 19.♕b1 ♗a6 20.♕b6 ♘b4 21.♖d1 ♖d8 22.♘d4

22...♔e8?

A mistake, or at least a very risky attempt to win.

22...♗xc4 23.♕xb4 ♕xb4 24.♘c6+ ♔d7 25.♘xb4 ♗xd3 26.cxd3 ♖a8 is equal, since defending the a-pawn with 27.♖a1 gives Black a good position after 27...♖c8 28.♔f1 ♗d2 29.♘a2 ♖c2.

23.♘b5 ♕xb6 24.♘xb6 ♔e7 25.♖b1 ♘xd3 26.cxd3 d5 27.exd5 exd5 28.g3 ♗d2 29.♖b2? After 29.♘c7 Black would have big problems. **29...♗a5 30.♘d4?!** 30.♘c7 still keeps some advantage. **30...♔d6 31.♘f5+??** A blunder. Instead 31.♖c2 ♗xd3 32.♖c6+ ♔e5 33.♘f3+ ♔f5 34.♘h4+ ♔e5 35.♘f3+ draws. **31...♔c7** **0-1**

6.♘xc6

□ **Martin Guillet**
■ **Jacob Murey**
Avoine 2003

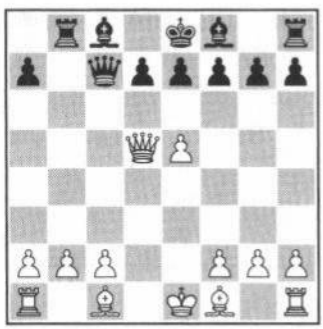
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♖b8 6.♘xc6

6.♘xc6 is the best move after 5...g6, and after random moves like 5...a6 or 5...h6. It also more or less forces Black to sacrifice a pawn. However, it does turn 5...♖b8 into a very useful move.

6...bxc6 7.e5 ♘d5

After 7...♘g8 White is just better.

8.♘xd5 cxd5 9.♕xd5 ♕c7



For the pawn Black has two semi-open files, a nice long diagonal and a slight advantage in development. Is it enough? Perhaps not quite, but the practical chances are good.

10.♕d4

With this move White prepares developing his bishops (10.♗e3 ♖xb2 or 10.♗d3 ♗b7 11.♕d4 ♗xg2 are good for Black). After 10.c3 e6 or 10.♕e4?! ♗b7 White has to go to d4 anyway.

10...e6

Instead 10...♕xc2 11.♗d3 is good for White. While 10...♗b7 11.♗e3 e6 12.0-0-0 ♗e7 13.♗b5 (after 13.♕xa7 it's dubious whether Black has enough for two pawns) 13...♗d5 14.a4 a6 15.♗xa6 ♖b4 16.♕c3 ♕xc3 17.bxc3 ♖xa4 18.♗b5 ♖g4 was OK for Black in Szilagyi-Okhotnik, Szombathely 2003.

11.♗e3

An interesting variation given by Meszaros is 11.c3 ♗c5 12.♕f4 0-0 13.♕g3 (13.♗d3 f6) 13...d6 14.b4 (14.♗h6 f5) 14...♖xb4! 15.cxb4 ♗d4 16.exd6 ♕c2 and Black will win back the rook, and probably the pawn too sooner or later.

Another plausible move is 11.♗d3, when 11...♗c5 12.♕f4 d6 (12...♗b4+ forces White to give up castling, but after 13.♔e2 it's only a temporarily inconvenience: 13...0-0 14.♖d1 and White is ready to bring his king into safety) 13.exd6 ♗xd6 14.♕c4 ♕a5+ 15.c3 0-0 gives Black decent compensation for the pawn.

11...♕xc2

A good alternative is 11...♕a5+ 12.♗d2 ♗b4, when only the ugly 13.♗c3 saves the pawn for White.

12.♗d3

12.♗b5!? ♖xb5 (12...♕c7) 13.♖c1 ♗b4+ 14.♔f1 ♕xc1+ 15.♗xc1 ♗a6 16.♔g1 ♖d5 17.♕g4 h5 18.♕f3 ♖xe5 gives a position in which the stronger player will have good winning chances.

12...♕xb2 13.0-0 ♕xd4 14.♗xd4 a5

Now White is the one who has good com-

pensation for a pawn. He doesn't play very accurately though and will gradually lose the compensation.

15.♖fc1 ♗e7 16.♗a7 ♖a8 17.♗e4 ♗b7 18.♗xb7 ♖xa7 19.♖c8+ ♗d8 20.♖b8 f6 21.♖c1?

There is no good reason to give the second pawn. I give the remainder of the game without comments.

21...fxe5 22.♖cc8 ♔e7 23.♔f1 a4 24.♗e4 d5 25.♗c2 e4 26.♖a8 ♖xa8 27.♖xa8 ♖f8 28.♔e2 ♖f5 29.♖b8 a3 30.♖b3 ♗c7 31.♖xa3 ♗xh2 32.♖h3 ♗g1 33.f3 h6 34.♖g3 g5 35.a4 ♗b6 36.♗b1 exf3+ 37.♖xf3 ♖xf3 38.♔xf3 h5 39.♗g6 h4 40.♔g4 ♔f6 41.♗c2 ♗d8 42.♗b1 ♔e5 43.a5 ♗xa5 44.♔xg5 ♗e1 45.♔g4 ♔d4 46.♔f3 e5 47.♔e2 ♗g3 48.♗g6 e4 49.♗f7 ♔e5 50.♗g8 d4 51.♗c4 ♔f4 52.♗a6 d3+ 53.♔d2 ♗f2 54.♗b7 ♔e5 55.♗c6 ♔d4 56.♔d1 ♗g3 0-1

6.♗c4

□ **Sofia Polgar**
■ **Andras Meszaros**
Budapest 1992

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♖b8 6.♗c4

According to Meszaros this is the best move, giving White the 'usual advantage'.

6...♕b6

At first sight 6...e6 looks good, since the bishop on c4 is not standing very well in Taimanov-like variations. However, after 7.0-0 White is threatening 8.♘xc6 bxc6 9.e5 ♘d5 10.♘e4 and neither 7...♕c7 8.♘db5 (the queen misses the usual return square on b8), nor 7...♗b4 8.♘db5 d6 9.a3 is attractive. By forcing the knight on d4 away, Black doesn't have to worry about ♘xc6 anymore.

7.♘b3

Here 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♗xd5 cxd5 10.♘xd5 ♕c6 11.♘e3 ♗a6 gives Black enough compensation for the pawn.

7...a6

This is a position where Black would rather have played 5...d6 than 5...♖b8. This is especially apparent after 7...e6 8.♗f4. So Black has to be careful not to get a bad position, but he's not without hope, uninspired play by White can turn the tides. It seems that 7...a6 is necessary, since after 7...♕c7 8.0-0 e6 9.♘b5 ♕e5 10.♖e1 Black's position is difficult.

8.0-0 e6

Meszaros recommends 8...♕c7 here, to prevent ♗f4. If White plays ♗d3, ♗e3, f4, ♕f3, ♖ae1 etc, Black ...e6, ...d6, ...♗e7, ...0-0 etc. White has chances for an attack, Black has the long-term prospects.

However, 9.♘d5 ♘xd5 10.exd5 seems to give White an advantage, e.g. 10...♘b4 (10...♘e5 11.♗e2 d6 12.f4 and Black lacks in space and development) 11.♘d2 e6 12.♖e1 b5 13.♗b3 ♗b7?! 14.♘e4! ♘xd5? 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.♕xd5! exd5 17.♘f6+ ♔d8 18.♖e8 mate.

Perhaps Black should try 8...♘e5 9.♗e2 d6 10.♗e3 ♕c7. White is of course better, but Black has counterchances with ...♘c4, ...♘g4 or perhaps ...g5 one time.

9.♗f4 e5 10.♗g5 ♗e7 11.a4?!

Not the best move, after 11.♘d5 ♕d8 (11...♘xd5 12.♕xd5 0-0 13.♗xe7 ♘xe7 14.♕xe5) 12.♘xe7 ♕xe7 13.♕f3 0-0 14.♖fd1 d6 15.♗xf6 gxf6 16.c3 the position is clearly better for White.

11...0-0 12.♗xf6 ♗xf6 13.♘d5 ♕d8 14.a5 ♗g5 15.♕d3 ♔h8

16.g3?!

White should either play something like 16.♖fd1 or 16.♕c3!? d6 17.♗xa6 bxa6 18.♕xc6 ♗b7 19.♕c4 ♕c8 20.♕d3 f5 21.f3 when Black does have compensation though.

16...d6 17.f4 exf4 18.gxf4 ♗h6 19.♔h1 ♗e6

Pawn f4 is a target now: Black can play ...♕h4, ...f5 etc. White doesn't want to play f5 herself because of ♘e5, but has troubles finding another plan as her next moves show.

20.♘b6 ♕h4 21.♘d5 ♗h3 22.♖f3 ♗g4 23.♖ff1

Here 23.♖g3 f5 24.♘d4 is better.

23...f5 24.♘d2 ♖be8 25.♘c7 fxe4 26.♘xe4? ♗xf4!

Now Black is winning.

27.♘g3 ♘e5 28.♕b3 ♖c8 29.♘e6 ♗xg3 30.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 31.♕xg3 ♕xg3 32.hxg3 ♖f2 33.♗d5 ♗xe6 0-1

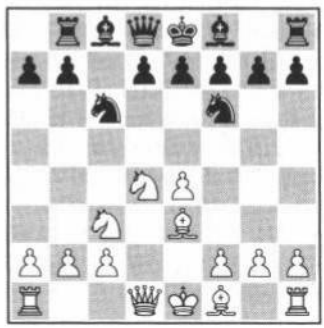
A nice victory of Meszaros against one of the famous Polgar sisters.

6.♗e3

□ **Istvan Borocz**
■ **Andras Meszaros**
Szekszard 1995

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 ♖b8 6.♗e3

A flexible move, useful both in set-ups with f3 and with f4. It leaves b2 unprotected, but attacks a7 indirectly.



6...a6

Shouldn't Black start thinking about real development moves? Well, 6...d6 is possible, yet no-one plays 5...d6 6.♗e3 ♖b8 and for a good reason. 6...e6 has the problem that 7.♘db5! gives White a clear advantage: after 7...d6 White can just take on a7.

However, 6...g6 is a good option. After 7.♗c4 ♗g7 8.f3 0-0 9.♕d2 d6 10.0-0-0 ♗d7

we have transposed to the 'Chinese Dragon', which has been played by among others: Tiviakov, Bu Xiangzhi and Ward.

This is what I played against Sprenger too (as I mentioned above). The game was drawn after: 11.♗b3 ♘a5 12.♗h6 b5 13.♗xg7 ♔xg7 14.h4 e5 15.♘de2 b4 16.♘d5 ♘xb3+ 17.cxb3 ♘xd5 18.♕xd5 ♖b6 19.♔b1 h5 20.♕a5 ♕c7 21.♕d5 ♗e6.

If White doesn't play 7.♗c4 Black might be able to play d7-d5, e.g. 7.f3 ♗g7 8.♕d2 0-0 9.0-0-0 d5 10.♔b1 would transpose to a well-known position, only that normally it is White to move!

Another well-known position (from the Accelerated Dragon) arises, via transposition, after 7.♘xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘xd5 cxd5 10.♕xd5 ♗g7.

Donaldson and Silman (in their book *Accelerated Dragons*, 1993) think that Black is OK in all cases:

– 11.0-0-0 ♗b7 12.♕d4 0-0 13.f4 d6.

– 11.♗c4 0-0 12.0-0 ♕c7 13.♗f4 ♗b7 14.♕d4 d6!.

– 11.♗xa7 ♖xb2 12.♗d4 ♖xc2 13.♗d3 e6 14.♕a8 ♖c6 15.♗b5 ♖a6!? 16.♗xa6 ♕a5+ 17.♔f1 0-0 18.♕a7 ♗xa6+ 19.♔g1 ♗xe5 20.h4 ♕d5! 21.♗xe5 ♗b7 22.♖h2 ♕xe5 23.♖d1 ♗c6, a long but interesting variation.

7.♗e2

7.♗c4 e6 8.0-0 ♕c7 seems like a decent Taimanov for Black.

Stronger is 7.♘xc6 which is a good move here: 7...bxc6 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♘xd5 cxd5 10.♕xd5 (10...♖xb2? 11.e6! fxe6 – 11...dxe6 12.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 13.0-0-0+– – 12.♕h5+ g6 13.♕e5 winning) 10...e6 11.♕d4 ♕a5+ 12.♗d2 ♗b4 13.♖d1 (13.c3 ♗c5 14.♕g4 ♖xb2 15.♕xg7 ♖f8 is good for Black, but 13.♗c3 ♗xc3+ 14.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 15.bxc3 is also a bit better for White) 13...♗xd2+ 14.♖xd2 ♕xa2 15.b3 ♕b1+ 16.♔e2 0-0 17.g3 ♕a2 18.♗g2 ♕a5 19.♖a1 ♕b5+ 20.♖d3 gives White an advantage because of the better pawn structure.

7...e5

Again playing it the Sveshnikov way is the best reaction to ♗e2.

8.♘b3 d6

Stronger is 8...♗b4! 9.♗f3 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 d6, with an equal position.

9.a4 ♗e6 10.0-0 ♗e7

We now have a Boleslavsky Variation where ...♖b8 would normally not be your first choice. True, it does make standard moves like ♘d5 less attractive. Besides, White might not be familiar with this type of position.

11.♗f3 ♘a5 12.♘xa5 ♕xa5 13.♕d2 h6 14.♖fd1 ♕c7 15.a5 ♖c8 16.♗b6 ♕c6

17.♘d5?!

With this move White plans an interesting

but dubious queen sacrifice. He probably did it because he didn't see a good way to defend c2 in preparation of ♘d5. However, it was possible to keep a small edge with h3, ♕e1 and ♖d2.

17...♕xc2 18.♘xe7 ♕xd2 19.♘xc8 ♕b4 20.♘xd6+ ♔e7 21.♖ac1

Rook, bishop and active pieces gives White enough compensation to draw, but Black is the only one with realistic winning chances.

21...♘d7 22.♗c7 ♔f6 23.♘f5 ♔g6

Instead 23...♕xb2 24.♖b1 ♕c2 25.♖dc1 ♕a2 26.♖xb7 ♗xf5 27.exf5 ♔xf5 28.h3 ♘f6 29.g4+ ♔g6 30.♗xc5 ♖e8 31.♗xf6 ♔xf6 32.♖c5 is almost equal.

24.♗g4 ♔h7

Again, taking on b2 doesn't seem to win: 24...♕xb2 25.♘e7+ ♔g5 26.♖b1 ♕a2 27.♖a1 ♕b3 28.♖ab1 ♕a4 29.♗xe6 fxe6 30.♖a1 ♕b5 31.♖ab1 ♕a4 32.♖a1

25.♘xh6 ♘f6 26.♗xe6 fxe6 27.♘f7 ♖c8 28.♖c3?

After 28.♘d6 ♖f8 29.f3 Black's advantage is small.

28...♘xe4

28...♕xb2 is perhaps even better, winning a pawn for nothing.

29.♖h3+ ♔g8 30.♖h8+ ♔xf7 31.♖xc8 ♕c5

32.♖cd8?

Better is 32.h3 ♕xf2+ 33.♔h2, which threatens 34.♖d7+.

32...♕xf2+ 33.♔h1 ♕xb2 34.♖8d7+ ♔g6 35.♗b6 ♘c3 36.♖f1? ♕b5 37.♖df7 ♘d5 38.♖7f3 ♘xb6 39.axb6 ♕xb6

Three pawns up means that Black is easily winning now.

40.h4 ♕d4 41.♖g3+ ♔h7 42.♖f7 e4 43.♖xb7 e3 44.♖b1 e2 45.♔h2 ♕e5 46.♖e1 ♔h6 47.♔h3 ♕f5+ 48.♔h2 ♕f1 0-1

In conclusion, White is better after 5...♖b8, but not so much, so it's a good move to let your opponent think for himself. Often transpositions to other Sicilians will occur, and the big question then is: which player is better prepared for this particular transformation? If you like to outwit your opponent in such a way, or if you just like Sicilians – without repeating grandmaster games for twenty moves – give the Meszaros Variation a try!

CHAPTER 4

Jeroen Bosch

SOS versus Anti-Berlin

Doesn't 4...♘e7 blunder a pawn?

□ **Thomas Ernst**
■ **Tom Wedberg**
Umea ch-SWE 2003

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.d3

'Not aiming for an opening advantage' is Kasparov's dry remark in Volume 1 of his *My Great Predecessors* series (when commenting on the fourth match game for the World Championship between Steinitz and Chigorin, Havana 1892). Indeed, 'only 4.0-0 gives chances of an advantage' he adds to the first match game for the World Championship between Marshall and Lasker (USA 1907), when Marshal went for 4.d4.

However, we all remember that it was partly on account of Kramnik's successful handling of the Berlin Variation (4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♗xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♕xd8+ ♔xd8) that Garry Kasparov lost his world title in 2000. And however principled 4.0-0 may be, Kasparov later revealed that his friends were begging him during the match to stop banging his head against the Berlin Wall with 4.0-0 and just play a (non-critical) move like 4.d3 or 4.♕e2.

These days both 4.d3 and 4.♕e2 are fairly popular. Objectively 4.0-0 may be stronger, but not all white players enjoy proving their endgame skills after a mere eight moves. With 4.d3 you may lose the theoretical battle but at least you obtain your regular type of

Ruy Lopez position (with the queens on).
Black has reasonable satisfactory answers to 4.d3 in the form of 4...d6 and 4...♗c5. However, wouldn't it be nice to put a spoke in White's wheel? To this end 4...♗d6 (a typical SOS move that we have come across numerous times in the course of this column) is unsuitable. White will be happy to play 5.♘bd2, preparing ♘c4. Please note, though, that 4...♗d6 is playable versus 4.♕e2 – a subject I may return to in a future column.
Against 4.d3 I propose the queer 4...♘e7 instead.

4...♘e7!?

Now why should you want to voluntarily remove your knight from its so-called natural square to obstruct your own development? Doesn't this waste valuable time in the opening (playing twice with the same piece and obviously a third time is in the making)?
A few things may be said in favour of 4...♘e7: First of all, Black is reacting to a very concrete threat (5.♗xc6 and 6.♘xe5).
Secondly, Black starts the normal regrouping manoeuvre ...♘c6-e7-g6 at an unusually early stage, but in economical manner.
A third argument in favour of the knight move is that ...c6 (later followed by ...d5) is prepared.
So far so good. However, doesn't Black blunder a pawn with 4...♘e7?
No he doesn't! After 5.♘xe5?? Black has 5...c6.

Now 6.♗c4 loses a piece after 6...♕a5+. So there is nothing better for White than the murky 6.♘xf7 ♔xf7 7.♗c4+ d5 8.♗b3. This actually occurred in practice, but two pawns are insufficient compensation here. Note that the intermediate 6.♘c4 – threatening mate – is simply met by 6...d6, when Black still wins.
By now I hope I have convinced you that 4...♘e7 at least deserves some attention.

5.0-0

The most natural continuation, but other, sharper, approaches deserve attention:

- 5.d4 ♘xe4 6.dxe5 a6 (perhaps just 6...c6 7.♗d3 ♘c5, or 7.♗c4 d5) 7.♗d3 ♘c5 8.♗e3 d6 (8...♘d5!?) 9.♗c4 d5 (better is 9...♗e6 10.♗xe6 ♘xe6 11.exd6 ♘f5!, as Black has decent compensation after 12.dxc7 ♕xc7 13.0-0 ♘xe3 14.fxe3 ♗c5) 10.♗xc5 dxc4 11.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 12.♘c3 ♗e6. White is a little better in this Berlin Wall type of position, Bezold-Lehner, Austria tt 2006/07.
- 5.♗c4. White redirects his bishop to the a2-g8 diagonal in the light of the upcoming ...c6. Obviously, pawn e5 is now under threat again.

It would be desirable to play 5...♘g6 if White had nothing better than 6.♘g5 d5 7.exd5 h6 8.♘e4 ♘xd5 as in Lee-Gunsberg, London 1887. However, as Bent Larsen demonstrated in an article in Kaissiber 20 (2005) White has 6.h4! which leaves Black more or less defenceless: 7.h5 is a strong threat and after 6...h5 7.♘g5 the knight can no longer be evicted from its attacking position.
Thus, play usually continues: 5...c6 6.♘c3 (instead, 6.0-0 ♘g6 7.♘c3 ♗e7 8.d4 d6 9.a4 ♗g4 10.♗e2 0-0 11.♗e3 ♕c7 was about equal in Cuartas-Baron Rodriguez, Sabadell 2007)
Note that this critical position may also be reached via the move order 5.♘c3 c6 6.♗c4. However, after 5.♘c3 Black may prefer 5...♘g6 (see below).

6...♕a5 (typical provocative play by Miles. However, he may have wanted to avoid 6...♘g6 7.d4 as in Gabrielian-Gorbatow, Moscow 2006, below) 7.0-0 h6 (7...d5 8.♘xe5! dxc4 9.♘xc4 ♕c7 10.e5 and so on is indicated by Gary Lane in his *The Ruy Lopez Explained*, Batsford 2005) 8.d4 d6. White clearly has obtained a favourable version of the Hanham Variation of Philidor's Defence. Miles had sufficiently provoked his opponent by this time however to make him surrender a few pieces after: 9.d5?! b5! 10.♗b3 c5 11.a4 b4 12.♘b5 ♘g6 (not 12...♘xe4? 13.♘d2 ♘xd2 14.♘xd6+ ♔d7 15.♘xf7 which wins for White). Now in view of his trapped knight on b5 and the closed nature of the position White has nothing better but to continue down the chosen path with 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.f4 a6! 15.fxe5 dxe5 16.d6 axb5 17.d7+ ♗xd7 18.♗xf7+ ♔d8 19.♗e3 bxa4, and Black won in Vysochin-Miles, Cappelle la Grande 1997.

Instead of 6...♕a5 practice has also seen 6...♘g6, and now:

– 7.♘g5 d5 8.exd5 h6 (to avoid 8...cxd5 9.♘xd5! ♘xd5 10.♕f3) 9.♘ge4 (9.♘xf7 ♔xf7 10.dxc6+ ♔e8 is an interesting piece sac) 9...♘xd5 10.♕f3 ♗e6 11.♗e3 ♗e7 12.0-0-0 ♕d7 13.h3 f5 and Black was OK in Ostojic-Kurajica, Cateske Toplice ch-YUG 1968.

– 7.d4! ♗b4?! (7...exd4 8.♕xd4 is an edge for White, while 7...d6? 8.dxe5 wins material) 8.dxe5 ♘xe4 9.♕d4! ♕a5 10.♕xe4! ♗xc3+ 11.bxc3 ♕xc3+ 12.♔e2 ♕xa1 13.♖d1 ♕c3 14.♗d2 ♕b2 15.♗b3 0-0 16.♕b4! (taking away square c3 from Black's queen and gaining time because of the direct threat of 17.♗xf7+) 16...d5 17.♗c1 a5 18.♕d2 ♕xc1 19.♕xc1 a4 20.♗xd5 cxd5, and Black resigned in Gabrielian-Gorbatow, Moscow 2006.

● 5.♘c3 (sensibly transposing into a Spanish Four Knights of sorts) 5...♘g6. Now in Mason-Gunsberg, Breslau 1889, White opted for 6.♗c4, when after 6...♗c5 7.♗e3 d6 8.♕e2 ♗b6 9.0-0-0 ♗xe3+ 10.fxe3 c6 11.d4 ♕e7 play was tense but still equal. Modern practice has witnessed two dangerous attempts:

– 6.d4 ♗b4?! (6...c6?! 7.dxe5 ♘g4 8.♗e2±; strongest may well be the SOS move 6...♗d6, with interesting play) 7.0-0 ♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♘xe4 (Black is playing with fire) 9.♕e1! ♘d6 10.dxe5! ♘xb5 11.♗g5 ♘e7 12.a4 h6 13.♗h4 0-0? 14.axb5 ♕e8 15.♘d4 ♘g6 16.♗g3 ♕e7 17.f4 ♖e8 18.b6! ♕c5 (18...cxb6 19.♘f5 ♕c5+ 20.♗f2 and 21.♗d4, with a great attack) 19.bxc7 d6 20.♕f2 dxe5 21.fxe5, with a positional edge in Navara-Luch, Czech Republic 2006.

– 6.h4!? c6 (if 6...h5 then both Alapin's 7.♗c4 ♗b4!? 8.♘g5 ♖f8 and 7.d4 must be

examined) 7.♗c4 h5 8.♘g5 (direct play, Efimenko must have already planned the coming piece sacrifice here. The alternative is 8.d4) 8...d5 9.exd5 cxd5?

Now Black appears to be fine. However, with the spectacular 10.♘xd5! Efimenko tears Black's position apart: 10...♘xd5 11.♕f3 ♗e6 (11...♘gf4 12.♗xf4 ♘xf4 13.♘xf7 or 13.♗xf7+) 12.♘xe6 fxe6 13.♗b5+ ♔e7 14.♗g5+ ♘f6 15.♕xb7+ ♔d6 16.c4 ♖c8 17.♗d2, with a well-nigh winning edge. Efimenko-Cherniaev, Coventry 2005.

Remarkably, the entire line including the piece sacrifice has been known for well over a century. In an editorial note to Larsen's above-mentioned article in Kaissiber Stefan Bücker cites the correspondence game Blake-Fraser from 1889 where White played the immediate 16.♗d2.

On move 9 Black's only chance is 9...b5!? 10.♗b3 cxd5. Now 11.♘xd5? ♘xd5 12.♕f3 ♗e6 fails to convince: without a check on the a4-e8 diagonal White does not have enough for the piece.

And 11.♘xb5 gives Black sufficient play for the pawn with 11...♗c5 or even simply 11...♗e7 and 12...0-0.

In case of 11.d4 Black must avoid 11...e4? 12.♕e2 followed by 13.f3. Better is 11...♗b4!? 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.0-0 (13.♕d4 ♘c6 14.♕e3+; 13.♗f4) 13...♗xc3 14.bxc3 0-0, which is fairly unclear after either 15.♖e1 or 15.♗f4.

5...♘g6

Mission accomplished! The knight has been re-directed from c6 to g6. To make something of his position White should play d3-d4 at some point. The b5-bishop is hitting thin air at the moment.

The immediate 5...c6 6.♗a4 (or 6.♗c4 d5) 6...♘g6 7.♖e1 d6 8.♘bd2 ♗e7 9.c3 0-0 10.d4 led to a perfectly normal position in Yudasin-Bisguier, Kerhonkson 2002.

6.d4

Here 6.♘c3 c6 7.♗a4 (7.♗c4 ♗e7) 7...♗e7 8.♗b3 0-0 9.d4 d6 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.h3 ♕c7 gave equal play in the recent Stokes-James, Great Yarmouth ch-GBR 2007.

Slower but in character with the Ruy Lopez is 6.c3 (this quiet approach is also possible on move 5) 6...c6 7.♗a4 ♗e7 8.♖e1 0-0 9.♘bd2 d6. R.Mainka-Welling, Saarlouis 2000.

6...c6

This is more accurate than 6...♗e7 7.♖e1 (7.dxe5 ♘xe4 8.♖e1 ♘c5) 7...exd4 (7...c6 8.dxe5!) 8.e5 ♘d5 9.♕xd4 c6 10.♗c4 ♘b6 11.♗b3 0-0 12.♘c3 d5 13.exd6 ♕xd6 14.♕xd6 ♗xd6 15.♗e3 ♗g4, for now 16.♘g5! was still a tiny but annoying little something in Grischuk-Kharlov, Internet 2004.

7.♗c4

7.♗a4 is also met by 7...♘xe4 8.♘xe5 (8.dxe5 ♘c5) 8...♘xe5 9.♕e2 d5. Black is already very comfortable. After 10.dxe5 ♘c5 11.♗b3 ♘xb3 12.axb3 ♗c5 13.♗e3 ♗b6! 14.♗xb6 ♕xb6 15.♔h1 0-0 16.♖a4? f6 his chances were preferable in Zakharov-Bykhovsky, Moscow 1961.

The immediate 7.dxe5 does not significantly alter things after 7...♘xc4 (7...cxb5? 8.exf6 is much better for White of course). For example: 8.♕e2 (preventing ...d5 for the moment; 8.♗c4 transposes to our main game) 8...♘c5 9.♗c4 ♗e7 10.♘c3 0-0 11.♗e3 b5!? 12.♗b3 ♘xb3 13.axb3 ♕c7 (White has trouble defending his e-pawn now) 14.♗d4 ♗b7 15.♖fd1 b4 16.♘a4 c5 17.♗e3 ♗xf3 18.♕xf3 ♘xe5 19.♕g3 d6, and Black was a sound pawn up in Cherniaev-Sepp, Moscow 2005.

7...♘xe4 8.dxe5 d5

This advance may also be postponed. Kiril Georgiev preferred 8...♗e7 9.♖e1 and now 9...d5. After 10.exd6 ♘xd6 11.♗b3 0-0 we have reached a similar position as below. Black has equal chances. 12.♘c3 ♗f6 (12...♖e8) 13.♗e3 ♗xc3 (this attempt to unbalance the game is a bit risky. However, Elo-favourite Georgiev obviously felt compelled to do something in this symmetrical position) 14.bxc3 ♗g4 15.♗c5! ♗xf3 16.♕xf3 b6! 17.♕xc6 bxc5 18.♖ad1 ♖c8 19.♕xd6 ♕a5 20.♕d5 ♕xc3, and after a long fight Atakisi-Georgiev, Gothenburg Ech-tt 2005, ended in a draw.

9.exd6

By capturing en passant White effectively resigns himself to an equal position. However, not steering the game into a symmetrical pawn structure is dangerous only for White.

9...♘xd6

Clearly not 9...♗xd6? 10.♕d4! (note that after 10.♖e1 Black has 10...0-0 in view of 11.♖xe4?? ♗xh2+) 10...♘f6 11.♖e1+ ♘e7 12.♗g5, with a large edge.

10.♗d3

The other bishop move also fails to annoy Black: 10.♗b3 ♗e7 11.♘c3 0-0 12.h3 ♗f6 13.♘e2 ♘e4! 14.c3 ♕c7 15.♗e3 ♖e8 16.♖e1 c5 17.♗d5 ♗f5, with an easy game for Black, Ginzburg-Saric, Saint Vincent tt 2005.

10...♗e7 11.♘c3 0-0

12.♘e4

This leads to further exchanges, but 12.h3 ♗f5 also gives Black a fully equal game.

12...♗g4 13.h3 ♗xf3 14.♕xf3 ♘e5

Getting rid of another pair of minor pieces.

15.♕g3 ♘xd3 16.♕xd3 ♘xe4 17.♕xe4 ♗f6 18.c3 ♖e8

And the peace was signed.

CHAPTER 5

Alexander Finkel

SOS versus the Paulsen

The early queen move 6.♕f3!?

Some time ago I was working with one of my students on building an opening repertoire with the white pieces against the Sicilian. After learning the lines against the Najdorf and the Rauzer we finally reached the Paulsen/Kan Variation, which was the last line on our Sicilian list. We had no trouble finding something satisfactory against 5...b5 and 5...♘c6, but then we saw some games with 5...♕c7 and realized that we might have a problem.

The thing is that if White is not interested in playing 6.♗e2 and 6.g3 he doesn't really have too many options, as 6.♗e3 – which is perfectly fine in case of 5...♘c6 – is met here with 6...♗b4 followed by ...♘f6 and ...d5 (basically that's the main idea behind 5..♕c7 – to avoid ♗e3 followed by 0-0-0 lines). So I started looking for some alternatives to meet this move order.

Just at the same time the Super Final of the Russian championship was taking place. Once in a while I was checking out the games, looking for some interesting opening ideas. That's how I ran into the game Nepomniachtchi-Rublevsky, which was played in that event. The way in which the talented Russian youngster crushed one of the world's leading experts in the Paulsen Variation looked extremely appealing to me, so we immediately decided to add this funny looking move to our opening repertoire!

It is funny that Black's early queen move is answered by another early queen move. With 6.♕f3 White immediately puts pressure on Black's position, trying to take advantage of a certain delay in development of Black's pieces, and dragging Black into unfamiliar territory.

To illustrate the ideas behind 6.♕f3 I selected two main games: Nepomniachtchi's win over Rublevsky and a much earlier win by Igor Zaitsev. Of course 6.♕f3 is not an elementary win against the Paulsen, but one thing is for sure – this move poses Black quite a few problems!

□ **Ian Nepomniachtchi**
■ **Sergey Rublevsky**
Moscow ch-RUS 2006

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♘c3 ♕c7 6.♕f3!?

6...♘f6

This move appears to be Black's most natural choice, however there are reasonable alternatives.

Firstly, after 6...♘c6, White should not play 7.♘b3, as occurred in the first game played in this line about 50(!) years ago: 7.♘b3?! ♘f6 8.♗f4 d6 9.♗e2 ♗e7 10.♕g3 0-0 11.♖d1 ♖d8 12.0-0 b5 with equal chances, Kortchnoi-Taimanov, Riga ch-URS 1958.

It makes more sense to play 7.♘xc6!?. When practice saw: 7...♕xc6 (both 7...dxc6 and 7...bxc6 are possible too) 8.♗d3 b5 9.0-0 ♗b7 10.♕g3 d6 11.♖e1! ♘f6? 12.a4 b4 13.♘d5 with an obvious edge in Kecic-Kodela, Ljubljana 1998.

Secondly, it seems that 6...b5 doesn't work out too well with White's queen on f3, but it is playable: 6...b5 7.♗f4 d6 8.e5!

Now 8...dxe5 9.♘dxb5 axb5 10.♗xb5+ ♘d7 11.♕xa8 exf4 12.0-0-0 ♘f6 13.♘e4 ♔e7 14.♘d6 ♘b6 15.♖he1 wins for White. So Black should play 8...d5, when after 9.0-0-0 ♘e7 the sacrifice 10.♘dxb5!? axb5 11.♘xb5 ♕a5 12.♘d6+ ♔d7 gives unclear play.

7.♗g5!?

For 7.♗d3 see the next game I.Zaitsev-Pyhälä, Jyväskylä 1994.

7...♕e5

Here 7...♗b4 8.0-0-0 would probably have transposed, as Black hardly has anything better than 8...♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♕e5, when White may opt for the game continuation with 10.♗e3.

It's important to mention that after 7.♗g5 Black has 7...♗e7 at his disposal, but most Paulsen players wouldn't want to switch to the Nadorf kind of position arising in that case, so it's a rather unlikely scenario.

7...♗e7 8.0-0-0 d6 9.♕g3 ♘bd7 10.f4 b5 11.♗xf6 ♘xf6 12.e5 dxe5 13.fxe5 ♘d7 14.♗xb5 axb5 15.♘dxb5 ♕c5 16.♕xg7 ♖f8 17.♘d6+ ♗xd6 18.exd6 unclear, Shabalov-Aldama, Las Vegas 2006.

8.♗e3 ♗b4

Black appears to have grasped the initiative. However, the Russian youngster has an interesting pawn sac in mind.

9.0-0-0! ♗xc3 10.bxc3

10...0-0

Apart from castling Black has:

– the blunder 10...♘xe4? which loses to 11.♗f4 ♕d5 12.c4.

– It seems that Black could accept the pawn sacrifice by 10...♕xe4!, but White obtains compensation after 11.♕g3 ♕g6 (11...0-0 12.♗d3 ♕g4 13.♗g5! ♕xg3 14.hxg3 with a clear edge in the ending) 12.♕d6 ♘d5 13.♗d3 ♕f6 14.♖he1 (or 14.♗d2) 14...♘c6 15.♘xc6 ♘xe3 16.♘b4! a5 (16...♕xf2!? 17.♖e2 ♘f5; 16...♘xd1 17.♘d5 ♘xf2 18.♘xf6+ gxf6 19.♗f5±) 17.♗b5 ♕e7 18.♖xe3 axb4 19.cxb4 ♖xa2 20.♔b1 ♖a8 21.c4, although things are very unclear in that case.

– 10...d5 11.exd5 ♘xd5 12.♗d2 0-0 13.♗d3 ♘c6 14.♕g3 ♕h5 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.c4±, Fier-Zuluaga, Cali 2007.

11.♗d3 d6

The immediate 11...b5 appears to be a bit risky, as after 12.♗f4 ♕c5 13.♘b3 ♕c6 (13...♕xc3? loses after 14.♗d6 ♖e8 15.e5 ♘d5 16.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 17.♕xf7 ♖d8 18.♖d3) 14.♗e5 ♘e8 15.♗d4 d6 16.♘a5 ♕c7 17.e5 White has a dangerous initiative on the kingside.

More solid is 11...d5 12.♗f4 dxe4 13.♗xe5 exf3 14.♘xf3 ♘bd7 15.♗d6 ♖e8, with an unclear position.

12.♘b3

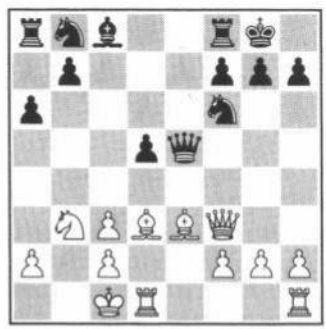
In case of 12.♗f4 ♕c5 13.♘b3 ♕c6 Black is threatening e6-e5 and ♗g4, while 14.♗g5 is answered by 14...♘bd7∓.

12...d5

12...♘c6 deserved attention: 13.♗f4 ♕xc3 14.♗xd6 ♖d8 15.♗e2 ♕xf3 16.♗xf3, but White keeps the slightly better chances in the arising endgame.

13.exd5 exd5?!

This looks dubious but White also has some edge after 13...♘xd5!? 14.♗d4 ♕g5+ 15.♔b2 ♘c6 16.h4±.



14.h3

Dealing with the threat of 14...♗g4.

In case of 14.♗f4 ♕e7 15.♖he1 Black would have played 15...♗e6, and now 16.♗g5 is parried by 16...♘bd7 with decent counterchances.

Note that winning the exchange with 15...♕a3+ 16.♔b1 ♗g4?!, gets Black into trouble after 17.♕g3 ♗xd1? 18.♗d6 ♕a4

(18...♘h5 19.♗xh7+! ♔h8 20.♗xa3 ♘xg3 21.♗d3!+−) 19.♗xf8 ♗g4 (19...♔xf8? 20.♕d6++−) 20.f3 ♘c6 21.♗xg7 ♔xg7 22.♗f5, with a significant advantage for White.

14...♘c6 15.♗f4 ♕e7

Not 15...♕xc3? 16.♗xh7+.

16.♗g5!

The most logical continuation. In case of 16.♖he1 ♗c6 17.♗g5 ♕a3+ 18.♔b1 ♘e4 19.♗xe4 dxe4 20.♕xe4 ♖fe8 White hardly has any advantage.

16...♗e6

It was possible to try same idea as in the previous note, but after 16...♕a3+ 17.♔b1 ♘e4 18.♗xe4 dxe4 19.♕xe4 ♗e6 20.♗e3! ♖fe8 21.♗c5 ♕xa2+!? 22.♔xa2 ♗xb3+ 23.cxb3 ♖xe4 24.♖he1± Black would have to work pretty hard to hold the arising endgame.

17.♕g3

The ending after 17.♗xf6 ♕xf6 18.♕xf6 gxf6 19.f4 is advantageous for White, but the young rising star of Russian chess strives for more than that.

17...♖fe8 18.♔b1

Necessary prophylaxis as 18.♕h4? is met by 18...♕a3+ 19.♔b1 ♘e4! 20.♗xe4 dxe4∓.

18...a5 19.♖he1 a4?

20.♘c5!

This move by itself isn't that hard to find, but White's next move is very easy to overlook!

20...♖a5

After 20...♕xc5 21.♗xf6 g6 22.♕h4 a3 23.f4 h5 24.♔c1! the threat of f4-f5 is highly unpleasant.

Instead 20...h6 loses to 21.♗xh6! ♘h5 22.♕f3 ♕xc5 23.♕xh5 gxh6 24.♕xh6 ♕xc3 25.♗h7+ ♔h8 26.♖xe6!? (or 26.♗e4+ ♔g8 27.♖e3 ♕b4+ 28.♔a1 ♕xe4 29.♖g3+ ♕g6 30.♖xg6+ fxg6 31.♕xg6+ ♔f8 32.♖d3) 26...♕b4+ 27.♔c1 ♕a3+ 28.♔d2 ♕f8 29.♗f5+ ♕xh6+ 30.♖xh6+ ♔g7 31.♖d6 with a sound pawn up.

21.♘d7!

A very nice move, which virtually decides the game in White's favour.

21...♘h5

White wins after 21...♕xd7 22.♗xf6 g6 23.♕f4!.

22.♗xe7 ♘xg3

23.♗b4!

White's pieces are so much stronger than the black ones that despite the material balance Black's position is extremely difficult.

23...♖a7

Hopeless is 23...♘xb4 24.cxb4 ♖a7 25.♖xe6 and 26.fxg3, and with two minor pieces for the rook White wins easily.

24.♗c5! ♖a5

White's advantage is overwhelming in case of 24...b6 25.♘xb6 ♘e4 26.♗xe4 dxe4 27.♖d6.

25.♗b4 ♖a7 26.♘c5 ♘h5
The black pieces are not coordinated after 26...♘xb4 27.cxb4 ♘h5 28.♗b5±.
27.♗b5 ♘f4

28.g3
Far less convincing is 28.♘xb7 ♘xb4 29.♗xe8 ♖xb7 30.cxb4 ♘xg2± followed by ...♖xb4+.
28...♘xh3 28...♘g6 29.♖xd5± wasn't a much better alternative. **29.f4 ♖aa8?!** Better was the computer move 29...♖e7. **30.♘xb7 ♖ec8** 30...♘xb4 31.♗xe8 ♖xe8 32.cxb4 ♖b8 33.♘c5 and wins. **31.♘d6 ♘f2** 31...♖c7 32.f5 ♗d7 33.♖xd5+−. **32.♘xc8 ♖xc8** 32...♘xd1 33.♗xc6 ♖xc8 34.♗xa4 ♘xc3+ 35.♗xc3 ♖xc3 36.f5+−. **33.♖d2 ♘e4 34.♖xe4!** Exploiting the weakness of the back rank. **34...dxe4 35.♗xc6 e3 36.♖d4 e2 37.c4 ♖b8 38.♔c1!** **1-0**

□ **Igor Zaitsev**
■ **Antti Pyhälä**
Jyväskylä 1994

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.♘c3 a6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♕c7 6.♕f3 ♘f6 7.♗d3!?
Another interesting attempt to meet 6...♘f6. White doesn't hurry with the development of the dark-squared bishop, keeping an option to put it on e3 later to switch to a 'normal' Scheveningen set-up, when the queen would come to g3 or h3 according to the circumstances. In this particular game White's strategical idea worked out perfectly, but the main reason for Black's quick defeat lies in a series of dubious moves later on.
7...b5 8.0-0 ♗b7 9.♖e1

9...♗d6?!
Black opts for this rather awkward move instead of the natural looking 9...d6 10.♕g3 ♘bd7 leading to an unclear position in which Black's chances appear to be pretty good.
10.♕h3 ♗e5
Quite a risky decision, which would have made sense had Black captured on c3 on the next move.
More in the spirit of the position was 10...♘c6 11.♘f3 ♘e5 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.♗d2 d6 unclear.
11.♘f3 ♘c6?
A very bad move, which runs into a typical Sicilian reaction for this kind of positions. Clearly better was 11...♗xc3, although without the dark-squared bishop Black's defensive task wouldn't be easy: 12.bxc3 d5 13.e5 (or 13.exd5 ♗xd5 14.a4 bxa4 15.♗a3) 13...♘e4 14.a4 ♕xc3 15.♖b1 b4 16.♕g4 with an attack.
12.♘d5!

It's hard to call this move a sacrifice, as White comfortably restores the material balance.

12...♕b8

It was necessary to take on d5, hoping to hold the position arising after 12...exd5 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xe5 ♘xe5 15.f4 ♘xf4 (15...d6 16.fxe5 dxe5 17.♕h5±) 16.♗xf4 d6 17.♗xe5 dxe5 18.♕h5.

13.♕h4!?

Very serious attention deserved 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 (13...♕xe5? 14.♗f4+—) 14.♗f4 d6 15.♘xf6+ gxf6 16.♕h6, intending to exploit the weakness of the dark squares in Black's camp.

13...♕d8?

Missing the last chance to put up proper resistance after 13...exd5 14.exd5 ♘xd5 15.♘xe5 ♘xe5 16.f4 ♘xf4 17.♗xf4 d6 18.♗xe5 dxe5 19.♖xe5+ (19.♕h5!?) 19...♕xe5 20.♖e1 ♕xe1+ 21.♕xe1+, although White is better in that case too.

14.♗g5! ♗xb2 15.♖ab1 ♘e5 16.♖xb2 ♘xf3+ 17.gxf3 exd5

18.♖b4!

Bringing the last remaining piece into play!

18...dxe4?!

A bit more persistent was 18...d6 19.e5 dxe5 20.♖xe5+ ♔f8 21.♖f4 ♖g8 22.♗xh7 ♕c7 23.♖e3, but it would hardly have changed the outcome of the game.

19.♗xe4 ♗xe4 20.♗xf6

Black resigned, for 20...gxf6 21.♖bxe4+ ♔f8 22.♕h6+ ♔g8 23.♖g4 is mate.

CHAPTER 6

Sébastien Mazé and Matthieu Cornette

Nimzo-Indian with 6...♕e8!?

Keene's queen move

This rare queen move was played for the first time in 1973 by Raymond Keene. Jan Timman followed in the same year. It never became fashionable, but in 2006 strong GMs like Bauer, Pelletier and Nikolaidis, have played it with excellent results.

What's the idea behind the queen's move? This is a good question. 6...♕e8 looks stupid, but this move has got some points:

– The first one is to prevent the pin ♗g5 (because of ...♘c4), which occurs in the main theoretical line 6...b6 7.♗g5 etc.

– Secondly, from e8, her majesty defends the e-pawn, intending to play ...d6 and ...e5.

– Sometimes, your queen can go to h5(!) after playing ...♘e4 and ...f5.

– Finally, the queen move may introduce a 'light-squared' strategy on the queenside: when Black plays ...a5, intending to fix the queenside by means of ...a4, White usually prevents that advance with b3. Now, after a subsequent ...a4 (which is answered by b4), your queen on e8 enables you to play ...b5 because this pawn is protected! Pushing the b-pawn in this way makes your bishop on b7 very strong, and it gains a splendid outpost on d5 for a knight.

It may sound difficult to believe that 6...♕e8 hides so many ideas, but the annotated games that follow should convince you!

What are the different plans at White's disposal?

– The most ambitious one is to play 7.f3, aiming to build up a strong pawn-centre by playing e4 next. Black has to react with ...e5, and be ready to counter d5 with the pawn thrust ...f5. See the notes to Botsari-Nikolaidis.
– A common plan is associated with a kingside fianchetto. Very often White plays this move without thinking too much, just because it's the normal move in the main line! White can play g3 with ♘f3 or not. If he does, this is the case where Black has to play on the white squares. If not, Black can simply play ...e5. See the notes to Hauchard-Bauer.
– Sometimes White tries something else, for example ♘f3, e3 and b4; or ♕c2, in order to play ♗g5. The first set-up, though natural-looking, allows Black the opportunity to seize the initiative by ...♘e4 and ...f5. In case White opts for the second one, his opponent will play ...e5. See the game Papadopoulos-Nikolaidis for more details.

□ **Anna Maria Botsari**
■ **Ioannis Nikolaidis**
Athens tt 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 ♕e8!? 7.f3!?
The main continuation. White controls the e4-square, and is ready to play e4, or maybe ♗g5, to disturb Black's coordination.
7...d6

The correct reply. In answer to the threat of ♗g5, Black has vacated the d7-square for his knight. Of course, the other idea of his last move is to play ...e5.
8.e4
Tempting, but clearly inaccurate, is **8.♗g5**. When you see the move of Nikolaidis in the game (after 8.e4) you will understand. Indeed, **8...♘fd7!** is the strongest reply. Black is ready to play ...e5 and later ...f5. The bishop is not well placed on g5.
Rather timid now looks 9.e3. After 9...e5 10.d5 (10.0-0-0 is a brave try: 10...♘c6! – with the idea to play ...f5 – 11.g4 f5 and the position is very complicated) 10...f5 11.0-0-0 a5 it is clear that Black is better, as he can more easily open files towards the enemy king. Claassen-Rechmann, Porz 1990.
So White continues with **9.e4**. This position can be reached by a different move-order too (after 8.e4 ♘fd7). Would White then consider 9.♗g5? Of course not, so 8.♗g5 must be considered inaccurate. Black goes **9...e5 10.d5 a5**. It's very useful to take space on the queenside. Black wants to play ...a4 followed by ...♘c5.

We will look at 11.b4, 11.b3 and 11.♗e3.
– **11.b4** axb4 12.axb4 ♖xa1+ 13.♕xa1 f5 (the obvious move) 14.exf5 (not 14.♗d3 ♘a6 15.♕c3 h6∓ and ...♕g6 is coming) 14...e4! (14...♖xf5 was also possible and strong. 15.♗e3 e4! 16.f4! and now 16...♘a6 or

16...♖f8!?) 15.f4 (in comparison with 14...♖xf5, the ♗g5 is misplaced. Black is slightly better after 15.g4 exf3+ 16.♔f2 ♕e4! 17.♘xf3 ♕xg4) 15...♘a6! 16.♕a3 h6 17.♗h4 ♖xf5 18.♘h3 g5!? and Black's chances were preferable in Sjöberg-Lindberg, Stockholm 1993.

– **11.b3** (to prevent ...a4) 11...f5

Bad now is 12.♗d3?! ♘c5 13.exf5 (not 13.♗c2 ♕g6∓) 13...♘xd3+ 14.♕xd3 ♗xf5 and Black stood better in the game P.Dimitrov-Pantev, Pamporovo 2001.

Correct is 12.exf5 ♖xf5 (12...♘c5 13.g4!) 13.♗e3 e4 (it's important to prevent ♗d3. Therefore 13...♘c5 is less effective, for example: 14.♗xc5 dxc5 15.♗d3 ♖f7 16.♘e2, when White is slightly better) 14.0-0-0 ♘a6 15.fxe4 ♖f8 16.♘f3 ♘ac5 and Black has ample compensation for the pawn.

– **11.♗e3**

In Sonntag-Rechmann, Germany tt 1989/90, Black played 11...♕e7 12.b4 (12.♗d3 would be followed by 12...♘c5 and then ...♘bd7 or ...a4. Note that 12...♘a6 13.b4 is annoying) 12...axb4 13.axb4 ♖xa1+ 14.♕xa1 f5 15.♗d3 (15.exf5 e4! is very powerful, for instance: 16.♕d4 ♘f6 17.fxe4 – or 17.g4 exf3 – 17...♘xe4 and ...♗xf5 next) 15...♘a6 (threatening the b4-pawn) 16.♕a5 ♘f6 when Black had a satisfactory position. However, Black has several tempting alternatives to 11...♕e7. 11...a4 is also logical. Black's next moves are ...♘a6 and ...♘dc5.

11...f5 looks tempting, but after 12.exf5 it's not easy for Black to find an adequate follow-up: 12...e4 (12...♖xf5 13.♗d3 ♖f8 14.♘e2±; 12...♘c5 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.g4±) 13.0-0-0 ♘f6 14.g4 exf3 15.♘xf3 with a white initiative.

11...♘c5 is the last logical choice: Black wants to play ...♘bd7, ...a4 or maybe ...f5, given the circumstances. 12.b4 (12.♗xc5 dxc5 and the position is not bad for Black. His worse structure is compensated by a strong bishop, the possibility to put the knight on d6, and the move ...f5) 12...♘a4 13.♕c2 f5 and the position is very unclear, but it seems that Black has decent attacking prospects.

8...♘fd7!?

A new move from Nikolaidis. Black wants to be ready to play ...f5 as soon as White plays d5.

In the past 8...e5 was the usual choice here:

● 9.♘e2!? ♘fd7! (not 9...exd4 10.♘xd4 d5 11.cxd5 ♘xd5 12.♕b3 and White has an obvious positional advantage; 9...c5 – Black decided to take care of the pawn structure himself by provoking the closing of the centre. I don't think however that this is the right plan – 10.d5 ♔h8 11.g4!± – the centre being blocked, it is important to start active play on the kingside. After the g-pawn has moved, the knight lands on a nice place on g3. Golod-Lerner, Tel Aviv 2005) 10.d5 (10.♗e3 transposes directly into 9.♗e3 below) 10...♘c5! planning ...f5.

In case of the other natural move – 10...a5 – White can claim a slight advantage with 11.b4! (11.♗e3 a4 or 11.b3 ♘c5 are fine for Black) 11...axb4 (11...f5 12.exf5 e4 13.f4 ♘b6 14.g4±) 12.axb4 ♖xa1 13.♕xa1 ♘a6 (13...f5?! 14.exf5 e4 15.f4, when I don't see a good move for Black) 14.♕c3 (14.♕b1 – defending the b4 pawn, and keeping control of the f5 square – 14...♘f6 15.♘g3 ♕a4 16.♗d2 c5!?) 14...♘f6 15.♔f2 ♕a4 16.♗d2 c5 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♘g3 and White is slightly better.

After 10...♘c5! there may follow:

– 11.b4 ♘a4 12.♕c2 f5 and Black has got what he wanted.

– 11.g4 a5 12.♗e3 (12.b4?! axb4 13.axb4 ♘d3+∓) 12...a4 seems good for Black.

– 11.♘g3 a5 12.♗e3 (12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 ♖xa1 14.♕xa1 ♘b3 15.♕c3 ♘xc1 16.♕xc1 ♕a4∓; 12.b3 a4! 13.b4 ♘b3 14.♖a2 f5 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♘xf5 ♘xc1 17.♕xc1 ♖xf5 and the rook can be rerouted to d4, via f4. Black is fine) 12...a4 13.♗xc5 dxc5. This kind of position is unclear. This is a sample line of what can happen: 14.♗d3 ♘d7 15.0-0 ♘b6 16.♖ae1 f6 and if 17.f4 (17.♗c2 ♕e7 18.♖f2 ♗d7 followed by ...♘c8 and ...♘d6) 17...exf4 18.♖xf4 ♘d7.

– 11.♗e3 a5! 12.b3 (12.♘g3 a4) 12...f5! (12...a4!? 13.b4 ♘b3 14.♖d1 f5 15.exf5 ♗xf5 16.♘g3 e4∞) 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.exf5 (14.♘g3 f4!) 14...♗xf5 15.♘g3 e4!. Before playing ...f5 it is important to include the moves 11...a5 and 12.b3. If 11...f5 then 12.♗xc5 dxc5 favours White.

● 9.d5 (too simple to be really strong!) 9...a5 (intending ...a4) 10.b3 ♘fd7 (...f5 and ...♘c5 are coming) 11.g4 ♘c5 12.♗e3 a4! (now Black decides to play on the queenside) 13.b4 (13.♗xc5 dxc5 is good for Black) 13...♘b3 14.♖a2 c6 15.♗d3 cxd5 16.cxd5 ♕e7 17.♘e2 ♘a6 18.♗c2 (18.♘c1 h5!) 18...♗d7 19.♗xb3 ♖fc8! 20.♕d3 axb3 21.♕xb3 ♕h4+ Black had enough compensation in Foisor-Bischoff, Groningen 1990.

● 9.♗e3 ♘fd7 (9...♘c6 was played by Adams, but I'm not sure if this is the right idea: 10.♘e2 a5 11.d5 ♘e7 12.h4 a4 13.h5 ♘d7 14.g4 and I prefer White in this position, Gulko-Adams, Hastings 1989/90)

White can react in several ways now:
– 10.♗d3 exd4 11.♗xd4 ♘e5 12.♗c2 ♘bc6 13.♗e3 ♗e6 and Black has no problem (interesting is 13...♕e6 with the idea to transfer the queen to g6: 14.b3 ♕g6 15.♔f1 f5). 14.c5 ♘c4!? 15.♗f2 (15.cxd6 cxd6 16.♗f4 ♖c8 17.♘e2 ♘6e5∓) 15...f5! 16.0-0-0 (16.b3 ♘4e5 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.♘e2 ♖c8) 16...fxe4 17.♗xe4 Baburin-Arkhipov, Oberwart 1991. And now 17...♕h5! and I trust Black's chances more.
– 10.♘e2 may be the best move. Black has to find an appropriate answer now: 10...a5!.
I think this is an interesting novelty. The idea is to wait while playing a useful move. Now White has to find something. With his knight on e2, finishing the development may prove difficult. 10...♘c6 11.d5 ♘e7 12.g4 looks difficult for Black whose game is a bit cramped. 10...c5 was played three times in the database, but each time White answered 11.d5 and won convincingly. It is difficult for Black to find a good plan there, as there is nothing he can hope for on the queenside, while carrying out the thematical f5-break will be very difficult after g4 and/or ♘g3. 10...f5 is tempting but not so strong: 11.exf5 ♖xf5 12.0-0-0!±.

After 10...a5 White's best is: 11.c5! dxc5 (11...exd4?! 12.♗xd4 attacking the g7 pawn) 12.dxc5 ♘c6 13.♘g3 ♘f6 14.♖d1 a4 15.♗b5 ♗d7 16.0-0 ♕e7 17.♖d2 ♖fd8 18.♖fd1 g6 followed by ...♔g7. White stands slightly better, but Black's position is quite solid.
Other moves include:
11.b4 axb4 (11...f5!?) 12.axb4 ♖xa1+ 13.♕xa1 ♘c6 with unclear play.
11.0-0-0 exd4 12.♗xd4 (12.♘xd4 ♘c5 13.♘b5 ♕e7 followed by ...♘c6, ...b6) 12...f6 (...♘c6 and ...♘c5 are next on the agenda).
11.♖d1!? a4! 12.c5! dxc5 13.dxe5! (13.dxc5 ♘c6 14.♘g3 ♘f6 intending ...♗e6-b3 and then ...♕e6) 13...b6 (13...♕xe5 14.♗f4 ♕xc3+ 15.♘xc3±; 13...♘c6 14.f4 f6 15.exf6 ♘xf6 16.e5) 14.f4 ♗a6 15.♘g3 ♗xf1 16.♖xf1 (16.♔xf1 ♕e6 followed by ...f6, when the position is very complicated) 16...♕e6 17.♔f2 f6 18.exf6 (18.♕d2 fxe5 19.f5 ♕f7) 18...♘xf6 unclear.
11.d5 (the logical option, but this move justifies the black set-up – ...a5 now completely fits in the position) 11...a4 transposing to the same kind of position as 10.d5.
– 10.d5. It's strange, but this position never appeared in practice. This is a key-position.
10...a5 (I always like this move. Black prevents his opponent from grabbing space on the queenside and tries to control some important squares: b3 and c5, in order to secure an outpost for the ♘d7. Not 10...f5?! 11.exf5 ♖xf5 – 11...e4 12.0-0-0; 11...♘c5 12.♗xc5 dxc5 13.g4 – 12.♗d3, followed by ♘e2, which is better for White)

Now 11.♘e2 transposes into the line starting with 10.♘e2.

11.♗d3 a4 (11...♘a6?! 12.b4) 12.♘e2 (12.♗c2 ♘c5 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.♘e2 ♘d7 15.0-0 ♕e7 and Black will play ...f6, ...♘b6 and so on, to transfer the knight to d6) 12...♘a6 13.♗c2 ♘ac5. After that Black will have to conceive a plan: I would say ...b6, ...♕e7, ...♘f6, ...♗d7 and after something like ...♘e8, ...g6, ...♘g7 he is prepared for ...f5.

11.b4 f5!? (an interesting try) 12.exf5 e4! 13.f4 (13.bxa5 ♘f6 followed by ...♗xf5, ...♘a6 and so on) 13...axb4 14.axb4 ♖xa1+ 15.♕xa1 ♘f6. The position is unclear. Note: we saw the same position with the knight on e2 instead of the bishop at e3. In that case White would have been able to support his pawn by ♘g3, and in case of ...♘g4, then ♗d4, hitting g7.

The most natural reaction is 11.b3 (avoiding a4) 11...♘c5 12.♘e2 f5! 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.exf5 ♗xf5 15.♘g3 e4! 16.0-0-0 (16.fxe4 ♗xe4 17.0-0-0 ♗g6 and ...a4 is coming) 16...a4! 17.♖e1 axb3 18.♕xb3 ♘d7 19.♘xf5 ♖xf5 20.♖xe4 ♖e5 21.♗d3 ♘f6 22.♖xe5 ♕xe5 and Black has enough compensation on account of the weak enemy king.

After 11.b3 ♘c5, White can also play 12.b4 ♘a4 13.♕c2 f5 with a double-edged game: 14.c5 (14.b5 f4 15.♗f2 ♘c5∞; 14.♗d3 ♘a6 15.♗d2 axb4 16.axb4 ♘b6 – threatening ♘xb4 – 17.♖a2 ♕g6 with an unclear position) 14...fxe4 15.fxe4 ♘a6 16.c6 (16.♘f3 axb4 17.axb4 ♘xb4 18.♕d2 ♘a6∞) 16...♕g6! and the position is very complicated.

9.♗d3

The logical continuation. White wants to prevent ...f5.

9.♗e3 e5 transposes into ...e5 first. It's difficult to find another option. 9.♘e2 e5 also transposes to lines we already discussed.

9...e5 10.d5

10.♘e2 is the alternative: 10...exd4 11.♘xd4 ♘e5 12.♗e2 (12.0-0 ♘xd3 13.♕xd3 ♘c6 followed by ...♗e6, when the position is approximately equal) 12...♘bc6 13.0-0 ♘xd4 14.♕xd4 f5! with equal play.

10...f5

But we don't care! This is more accurate than 10...♘c5: 11.♗c2 f5 12.b4!. This is the reason why Nikolaidis played ...f5 first.

11.exf5 ♘c5 12.♗c2

12.g4 was more testing, but it is always risky to play g4 with your king in the centre. 12...e4 and now:

– 13.fxe4?! ♘xe4∓.

– 13.♗e2 ♘bd7 (13...♘d3+ 14.♗xd3 exd3+ 15.♔f2±) 14.♗e3 g6 15.fxg6 hxg6 16.0-0-0 ♘a4 17.♕d4 ♘ac5 18.♔b1 ♘e5 19.♗h6 ♖f7.

– 13.♗c2 ♘bd7 14.♗e3 ♘d3+ (14...♘e5) 15.♗xd3 exd3 16.♕xd3 ♘e5 17.♕e2 ♘xc4 18.♔f2.

12...♗xf5

13.b4

White may have other, better, options, but in any case Black's prospects are quite good.

– 13.♗xf5 ♖xf5 14.♘e2 (14.b4 e4! 15.bxc5 exf3+ 16.♔f2 fxg2+ 17.♔xg2 ♕e4+ 18.♘f3 ♘d7∓) 14...e4 15.0-0 exf3 16.♖xf3 ♖xf3 17.♕xf3 ♘bd7 Black is fine. ... ♘e5 and ...♕g6 are coming.

– 13.♘e2 ♗xc2 14.♕xc2 e4 15.fxe4 (15.0-0 exf3 16.gxf3 ♘bd7 17.b4 ♘b3!∓) 15...♘bd7 16.♗f4 ♕xe4 17.♕xe4 ♘xe4 18.0-0 g5 19.♗e3 ♘e5 and Black stands slightly better.

13...e4!

Very often the right move!

Instead 13...♕g6!? was also strong: 14.♗xf5! (14.♘e2 ♗xc2 15.bxc5 ♘d7∓) 14...♕xg2 15.♕c2 ♕xh1 16.♗e3 e4! 17.fxe4 (17.♗xh7+ ♔xh7 18.bxc5 ♘d7∓) 17...♘cd7! (17...g6 18.♗g4 ♖f4 a nice shot, but after 19.♕e2! life isn't so rosy for Black) 18.0-0-0 ♘e5 19.♗d4 ♘bd7 20.♕e2 (threatening to trap the queen) 20...♖xf5! 21.exf5 ♖e8∓.

14.f4?!

After this move, White's situation is critical. 14.♗e3 ♘d3+ (14...exf3 15.♘xf3 ♗d3 16.♕d2 ♗xc2 17.bxc5 looks rather acceptable for White) 15.♔d2 ♗g6 (15...♘e5 16.f4! ♘g4 17.h3 ♘xe3 18.♕xe3 ♘d7 19.g4 ♗g6 20.♘e2 and, even though the king has landed on d2, White is OK) 16.♘h3 (16.fxe4?! ♘f2!) 16...♘d7 and the position is very complicated. It is however easier to play with a safe king than with a wandering one!

14...♘d3+ 15.♗xd3 Not 15.♔f1 ♘d7 16.♘e2 a5!∓. **15...exd3+ 16.♔f1 ♘d7 17.♗b2** Threatening mate! **17...♕g6 18.♖e1**

18...♘e5! Now, it's over! **19.♕d4** 19.fxe5 ♗h3+ 20.♘f3 ♕xg2 mate. **19...d2 20.♕xd2 ♗d3+ 21.♔f2 ♘xc4 22.♕c1 ♘xb2 23.♕xb2 ♖xf4+ 24.♘f3 ♖af8 25.♖e3 ♗e4 26.♕b3 ♕h5 27.♕c3 ♗xd5 0-1**

A very good game by Black. He played a novelty, which introduces not a new idea but a refined move-order. The point is to react actively against the most logical move, 9.♗d3.

7.f3 is a very interesting move, aiming at building a strong centre, but we have seen that Black has got adequate resources.

□ **Arnaud Hauchard**
■ **Christian Bauer**
Narbonne ch-FRA 1997

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 ♕e8!? 7.g3

– 7.b3 (not the usual move-order, but we will transpose in the 7.g3 line) 7...d6 8.♗b2 a5! (White firmly covers the e5-square, so that it's time to switch to the other plan) 9.g3 a4! 10.b4 b5! (a nice positional idea, aimed at controlling the white squares and securing a first-class outpost for a knight at d5) 11.♗g2 ♖a7 12.c5 (12.cxb5 ♕xb5 followed by ...♗a6 or ...♗b7. Paradoxically, opening the position may suit Black better than his opponent. Indeed, his pieces become very active and White can't castle easily, as e2 is hanging) 12...♗b7 (if Black manages to trade this bishop, White will remain with a bad one at b2, which explains the answer) 13.f3 (13.♘f3 ♗e4! followed by ...♘d5 and ...♘c6) 13...♗d5 14.♘h3 ♗c4!? (14...♘c6 was also possible, but it's typical of Bauer's style to create concrete problems!) 15.e4 ♘c6 (the position is very murky) 16.♕e3

16...♖a6 (16...dxc5 was the other possibility, but Black wanted to keep the tension: 17.bxc5 b4! or 17.dxc5 e5∞) 17.0-0-0 e5! 18.d5 ♘e7 19.♔b1 ♘d7 20.♖c1?! allows a strong reply: 20...c6! (what a move. I am sure that White forgot about this eventuality) 21.cxd6 ♘c8 22.dxc6 ♖xc6 23.f4 (23.♖hd1 ♘xd6) 23...♖xd6 (23...f6!? 24.♘f2 ♘xd6 25.♖hd1 ♕f7∓) 24.♘f2 ♘cb6 25.♗h3 ♗b3 and Black stood slightly better and went on to win in N.Brunner-Bauer, Metz 2006.

– 7.♘f3 b6 (in the introduction I told you about this game, which illustrates the fact that the plan ...♘e4 and ...f5 isn't so effective when White plays with g3. Hence, 7...d6! is the correct move) 8.g3 ♗b7 9.♗g2 d6 10.0-0 ♘e4 11.♕c2 f5 12.d5! (this is always the right reaction) 12...exd5 13.cxd5!? (if Black doesn't grab the pawn, then after ♖d1 White stands simply better. 13.♘d4 was also possible, with the idea ♘b5) 13...♗xd5 14.♖d1 and White enjoys a pleasant initiative for the sacrificed pawn. Ree-Timman, Amsterdam 1973.

7...d6

7...a5 (even though this is not the normal idea, there is nothing wrong with the move) 8.b3 d6 9.♗g2 h6!? (normal was ...e5, but it looks like Pelletier is insisting on trying to implement the plan with ...a4 and ...b5. With the bishop on g2, however, it was not possible right now. He thus decided to wait for the arrival of the knight on f3. White was on the other hand threatening ♗g5 – because ...♘e4 isn't possible – so that 9...h6!? makes sense here) 10.♘f3 (given what precedes 10.♗b2! was better) 10...a4 (of course) 11.b4 b5! 12.♘d2 (12.cxb5 ♘d5! is an important intermediate move, covering the c7-pawn. The idea is to cement the knight by means of ...f5 and delay the unavoidable recapture of the b5-pawn. 13.♕c2 f5 14.0-0 ♕xb5∞) 12...♖a7 13.0-0 ♗b7 (like in Brunner-Bauer, the exchange of the light-squared bishops is desirable for Black) 14.♕d3 (an artificial move, designed to play e4. 14.e4 bxc4 15.♖e1 d5!) 14...bxc4 15.♘xc4 ♗a6!? (a concrete idea. This may not be the best, but in a practical game it is very important to create problems! 15...♗xg2 16.♔xg2 ♕b5 was the other possibility, intending to play ...♘c6 next) 16.♕c2 ♕b5 17.♘a5 ♕xe2 (the idea of the preceding moves) 18.♕xa4

We have been following Moor-Pelletier, Switzerland 2006. In the game Pelletier now played 18...♘bd7 when White could have obtained a slight advantage with 19.♕d1! (instead of the game continuation 19.♕b3). Equality would have resulted from 18...♘d5 19.♕d1! ♕xd1 20.♖xd1 ♘c3 21.♖d2 ♗b5!.

8.♘f3

Or 8.♗g2 e5! (the adequate reaction) 9.dxe5 (9.♘f3 e4!) 9...dxe5 10.♘f3 (10.♗e3 ♕e7 –

Her Majesty has accomplished her mission successfully – 11.♘f3 ♘c6 12.b4 ♖e8 13.0-0 ♗f5 14.♖ad1 h6=) 10...♘c6 11.0-0 (11.b4 ♗f5!) 11...a5! 12.b3 ♘e4!? (an interesting transfer of the knight) 13.♕e3 ♘d6 14.♗b2 f6 (...a4 is in the air, but ...♘f5 too) 15.c5 ♘f5 16.♕e4 ♕f7 and Black's position was OK in Faldt-Sjöberg, Sweden 1995/96.

8...a5! 9.b3

The traditional reaction. If Black is allowed to get ...a4 in, the white queenside will be permanently fixed.

9...a4! 10.b4 b5!

Owing to the queen's placement this move is possible. Black's dream, after White plays c5, would be a massive swap, resulting in an endgame 'knight against bad bishop'

11.c5

– 11.♗g2 bxc4 12.♕xc4 ♖a7! (this move frequently occurs in this line) 13.0-0 ♘d5 14.♕c2 (14.e4 ♗a6!) 14...f5 (Black wants to play ...♘d7 and ...♘f6) 15.e4 fxe4 16.♕xe4 ♘d7 17.♖e1 ♘7f6 and the position was unclear in Dzevlan-Sjöberg, Stockholm 1993.

– 11.cxb5 ♖a7!? (11...♘d5!? 12.♕c2 f5 is more standard, as we have already seen. Black can then recapture the enemy pawn with the queen or by means of ...♗d7. It is possible to insert ...♘d7, ...♘b6 or ...♘f6 before, in order to improve the knight's position) 12.♕c2 (12.♗g5 ♘d5 followed by ...f5) 12...♗b7!? 13.♗g5 ♗e4! (that's the idea! Black will continue with ...♘d5 and ...f5, when he controls the light squares) 14.♕b2 ♘d5 15.♖g1 f5 and I like Black's position, Kolev-Pavlovic, Vrnjacka Banja 1990.

11...♗b7 12.♗g2 ♗e4!

12...♗d5!? is of course also playable, but I prefer Bauer's move: 13.0-0 ♘c6, and now:

– 14.♖e1 ♘e7 15.♕d3 ♗e4 16.♕d1 dxc5 17.dxc5 ♖d8 18.♗d2 ♘c6 19.♖a2 ♕d7∓ Medancic-Kosten, Amantea 1992.

– 14.♗f4 ♘e4 15.♕b2 f5 16.♖ac1 ♘e7 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.♖c7 ♘g6 19.♘d2 ♘xf4 20.gxf4 ♘f6 21.f3 ♖c8∓ Lapcevic-Vratonjic, Vrnjacka Banja ch--SER 2006.

– 14.♗b2 ♘e7 15.♖fe1 ♘e4 16.♕c2 f5 17.♘d2 ♘xd2 with counterplay, M.Gurevich-Adams, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

13.♕e3

13.0-0?! ♘d5 14.♕d2 f5 15.♖e1 f4 16.♘h4 ♗xg2 17.♘xg2 ♕g6 with an attack, Chekhov-Sjöberg, Kecskemet 1991.

13...♕c6

This is a logical development of Black's opening strategy.

14.0-0 ♕d5 15.♗b2 ♘c6

It's clear that Black is fine here. From now on, I will follow an analysis of Finkel's, with some suggestions for improvements.

16.♖fc1!? ♘e7 17.♗f1 ♕h5 18.h3

♘ed5 19.♕d2 h6?!

Too slow. Correct was 19...♗f5! 20.♕g5 (20.g4 ♗xg4 21.hxg4 ♕xg4+; 20.cxd6 ♘e4 21.♕e1 cxd6∞) 20...♕xg5 21.♘xg5 h6 equal.

20.♕e1!

Finally threatening to move the knight from f3, and thus forcing Black to take the knight and concede the advantage of the bishop pair. In most of the cases this plus is quite an important one.

20...♗xf3 21.exf3 ♖ab8 22.♔g2 ♕g6 23.♕d2 ♘h7 24.♖e1?!

A very strange decision to remove the rook from the semi-open c-file and to put it on e1, where it is out of play. The simple 24.cxd6 cxd6 25.♖c6 ♖fd8 26.♖ac1 ♕h5 27.♗e2 would have promised White a serious advantage. Somewhat better is 26...♘hf6 27.♕c2! ♕xc2 28.♖1xc2 ♔f8±.

24...f5 25.♖ad1 ♖fe8 26.♗d3 ♘g5 27.h4 ♘f7

Now Black has sufficient play to compensate for the two bishops.

28.♔h2

28.♖e2 ♕f6 29.♖de1 g5 30.♖h1 ♔g7 31.♖ee1 unclear.

28...♕h5 29.♕e2 g5?

Giving up the queenside and hoping to create something on the kingside, which seems to be impossible.

29...c6 deserved attention, when after 30.cxd6 ♘xd6 31.♖c1 ♖bc8 32.♖c2 ♕f7 33.♖ec1 Black has a playable position.

30.♔g2?! Strong was 30.♗xb5! ♖e7 (30...gxh4 31.g4) 31.♔g2 gxh4 32.♗c6! hxg3 33.fxg3 f4 34.g4±. **30...gxh4 31.♖h1?** After this move White not only loses his advantage, but he creates himself problems, which are not so easy to solve. Perhaps 31.♗xb5!?. **31...♘g5! 32.f4** For 32.♖xh4 ♕xh4! 33.gxh4 ♘f4+ 34.♔h1 ♘xe2 35.hxg5 ♘f4∓. **32...h3+ 33.♔f1 ♘f3 34.♕c2** 34.♗xb5 ♖e7! (not 34...♖xb5 35.♕xb5 ♘h2+ 36.♔e1 ♘f3+ 37.♔f1=) 35.♗c4 h2 36.♕d3 ♘xf4! 37.gxf4 ♖g7 38.♗xe6+ ♔f8 39.♕xf5+ ♕xf5 40.♗xf5 ♖e8! winning. **34...h2 35.♔g2 ♘xf4+! 36.gxf4 ♖e7! 37.d5 e5 38.♔f1 ♖g7 39.♕c1 ♖g1+ 40.♔e2 ♘d4+ 41.♔d2 ♖xh1 0-1**

□ **Panagiotis Papadopoulos**
■ **Ioannis Nikolaidis**
Litohoro 2006

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♕c2 0-0 5.a3 ♗xc3+ 6.♕xc3 ♕e8 7.♘f3

A quite logical move. We can't blame White for developing a knight.

7.♕c2, planning to play ♗g5, looks strange. In fact, we'll get the same kind of position as in the variation 7.f3. In that case we learned

that the bishop isn't well placed at g5, and that it is better for White to have the e4-pawn covered by a colleague at f3, rather than by the queen. 7...d6 8.♗g5 and now either 8...♘bd7 or 8...♘fd7. The latter may be easier to remember since this knight always retreats to d7 in this line. In the present variation, both knight-jumps are appropriate and of a roughly equal value.

8...♘bd7 9.e4 h6 10.♗d2 (not the most common square for the bishop. 10.♗h4 e5!) 10...e5 11.d5 a5 12.b3 ♘c5 13.f3 ♘h5! and I think Black stands already better, as ...a4 or ...f5 is coming, Anelli-Valerga, Buenos Aires 2005.

Alternatively, 8...♘fd7 9.e4 e5 10.d5 a5 11.♖d1 is best answered by 11...♘a6!. Because the rook is on d1, b4 isn't possible. ...♘dc5 is coming, followed by ...f5.

Less good are 11...f5 12.exf5 ♘c5 13.g4 (now we can see the only difference: it is not possible to open the centre by means of e4) and 11...a4 12.♗e3 ♘c5 (12...♖a5?!. I don't like this move from Kharlov-Ward, Gausdal 1992) 13.♗xc5 dxc5 14.♘e2±.

7...d6 8.e3

This doesn't look too ambitious. White wishes to develop the bishop on e2 and take space on the queenside with b4. Now we will see another plan for Black, and a very exciting one! Please note that 8.g3 transposes to Hauchard-Bauer.

8...b6

Logical. White didn't fight for the white squares, so Black simply develops his bishop on its strongest diagonal.

9.b4 ♗b7 10.♗e2 ♘bd7 11.♗b2

11...♘e4!

Of course the right idea. White isn't well-prepared to deal with this strong knight.

12.♕b3 f5!

In general, when Black obtains this set-up, his opponent tries to react with d5, but in the current situation it's not very effective.

13.0-0

13.d5 exd5 14.cxd5 ♘df6 followed by ...♕f7. The d5-pawn is too weak and bound to fall.

13...♖f6!?

A logical continuation. Nikolaidis brings all his pieces into the attack.

13...♘df6 was also possible and better, leaving Black with a good game.

14.♖ac1

Best was 14.d5!. Trying to play d5 rather than c5 was superior for two reasons: White would open the a1-h8 diagonal while closing the menacing h1-a8 one. Now:

14...♖g6 is not very logical. Black needs to deploy the queen to h5!. 15.♖ad1! (15.♘d4 ♘d2 16.♕c3 ♘xf1 17.♘xe6 ♘xh2 18.♔xh2 ♘f6∓) 15...c5 (interesting, in order to prevent ♘d4, but insufficient to equalize. 15...exd5 16.♘h4) 16.dxc6! ♗xc6 17.c5! bxc5 18.♘h4! cxb4 19.♘xg6 ♕xg6 20.f3 ♘ec5 21.♕xb4 ♖b8 22.♕d2±.

14...e5 is of course possible, intending to continue aggressively. The drawback of this move is the entombment of the bishop on b7. Best, though, is 14...♖h6 15.♘d4! (15.dxe6 ♕xe6 16.♖ad1 ♕f7! 17.♘d4 c5 18.♘b5 a6 19.♘c3 ♘xc3 20.♕xc3 ♖e8 and Black looks fine) 15...exd5! (not 15...♘d2 16.♕c3 ♘xf1 17.♘xe6 ♘e5 18.♖xf1 ♖xe6 19.dxe6 ♕xe6 20.c5! and White has got some pressure)

– 16.cxd5 ♘d2 17.♕c3 ♘xf1 18.♘xf5 (18.♖xf1 ♗xd5) 18...♖g6 19.♗xf1 ♗xd5 20.♕xc7 ♕e6 21.♘g3 ♘e5 and the position is messy.

– 16.♘xf5 ♖g6 17.cxd5 ♘d2 18.♕d3 ♘xf1 19.♖xf1. White has good compensation for the exchange but after 19...♘f6 20.♗f3 ♕f7 followed by ...♖e8, the black position is very solid.

14...♖h6!

Black follows his plan.

15.c5

The threat is c6. 15.d5 e5! is again playable, when in comparison with the same position one move earlier, Black has inserted a more useful move than White. Next is ...♕h5.

15...♕h5!

Now we can see yet another idea of 6...♕e8!

16.♖fd1

16.h3 ♗d5! (the bishop is very strong and shouldn't be left shut in by c6) 17.♗c4 ♘df6 Now Black is slightly better, mainly because of the very bad ♗b2. The knight move is stronger than 17...♖g6 18.♗xd5 ♕xf3 19.g3 ♖xg3+ which looks attractive, but Black is only rewarded by a perpetual check: 20.fxg3 ♕xg3+ 21.♔h1 ♕xh3+ 22.♔g1 ♕g3+ 23.♔h1.

If 16.c6 then 16...♘d2!−+. This is the idea!

16...♗d5! 17.♗c4

17.♕a4 ♘df6 (♘g4 is coming) 18.cxd6 (18.h3 ♘g5!) 18...cxd6 19.♕a6 ♖f8! and White has got serious concerns, for example: 20.h3 (20.♕xa7 ♘g5! 21.♖c7 ♖g6!−+; 20.♖c8 ♘g5!) 20...♘g5 21.♘xg5 ♕xg5 22.♗f1 ♖xh3 23.♖c8 ♘e4∓.

17...♘df6 18.♗xd5 ♘xd5

The dark horses completely dominate the position.

19.cxd6 cxd6 20.♖c6 ♖g6! 21.♘e1 ♖f8

21...f4! was even better.

22.♕c2

Or 22.f3 ♘g5 winning.

22...f4! 23.exf4?!

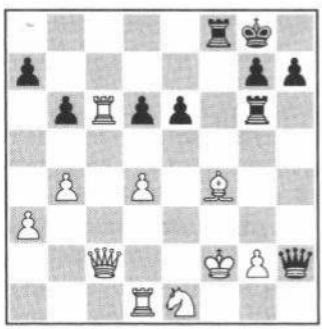
The last mistake, but it was already too late. 23.♖c8 fxe3 24.♖xf8+ (24.f3 ♕xh2+! 25.♔xh2 ♖h6+ 26.♔g1 ♘g3 mating) 24...♔xf8 25.fxe3 ♘xe3 26.♕c8+ ♔f7 27.♕d7+ ♔f6 28.d5+ ♔g5 and the king escapes to h6.

23...♘xf2

Not the most precise, but everything is winning!

After 23...♘xf4! the computer assesses the position as +6.00 for Black!

24.♔xf2 ♕xh2 25.♗c1 ♘xf4 26.♗xf4



26...♕xf4+?

Black misses an easy win! Now his task is getting harder. Winning was 26...♖xg2+! 27.♘xg2 ♖xf4+ 28.♔e3 ♕g3+ 29.♔d2 ♖xd4+ 30.♔e2 (30.♔c1 ♕xa3+) 30...♕xg2+ 31.♔e3 ♕xc2 32.♖xc2 ♖xd1.

27.♘f3 ♕g5 28.♖g1?

28.♖f1! was the only chance when Black has to find precise moves to carry on the assault: 28...♕xg2+ 29.♔e1 ♕g3+ 30.♔d1 ♕h3! 31.♖f2! (31.♕d3 ♖gf6! 32.♖c3 g5∓) 31...♖g3 32.♖c3 h5 followed by ...♕g4 and ...h4, but it's not clear that Black stands really better.

28...♕h4+ 29.♔e2 ♖xf3!

The decisive blow.

30.♔xf3

30.♖c8+ ♖f8 31.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 32.♕c8+ ♔f7 33.♕c7+ ♕e7∓.

30...♖f6+ 31.♔e3

And White resigned. After 31...♕g3+ the game is over.

This game is a good illustration of how to play against ♘f3, e3 and b4. ...♕e8 is really useful for that purpose; when Black manages to play ...♕h5, things are becoming very dangerous for White.

In conclusion:

– 6...♕e8 in the 4.♕c2 Nimzo-Indian is completely sound and playable. This unusual move clearly isn't so 'stupid'.

– 7.f3 seems to be the critical line, but the last attempt from Nikolaidis playing the black side is really motivating.

All in all, the ball is in White's court, and it is his turn to demonstrate a real edge. We wish you a lot of success with this variation!

CHAPTER 7

Arthur Kogan

The Budapest Gambit Can Still Surprise!

A personal view on 3...♘e4

Do you like gambits as Black, but do you have the feeling that most gambits are too well studied? Well, here is a gambit that I found very interesting and not too popular in practice, so it gives excellent SOS chances! I will try to show you the main ideas with my home analysis and a special selection of instructive games:

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e5

The Budapest Gambit, so what is new here?

3.dxe5 ♘e4

OK, 3...♘g4 is more common and well studied, so let's try to surprise! With the odd 3...♘e4 (the Fajarowicz line) we don't even attack e5, so it can really confuse White. The usual idea for Black is to develop quickly and later to break with ...d6 or ...f6, to open more files and diagonals for his pieces, a strategy which can create fun games!

I will present you with a personal view of how Black should play against the main lines.

I will look at:

A 4.a3
B 4.♕c2
C 4.♘d2
D 4.♘f3

However, let's first investigate a few minor alternatives:

– 4.g3 ♗c5 (or 4...♗b4+) 5.e3 ♘c6 6.♗g2 ♗b4+ 7.♘d2 ♘c5 8.♘f3 ♘d3+ 9.♔e2 ♘xc1+ 10.♖xc1 0-0 with obvious compensation in Schandorff-Conquest, Torshavn 1997.

– 4.♕d5 is ambitious but risky. Let's see 4...♗b4+ (4...f5 is less precise but still playable: 5.exf6 ♘xf6 6.♕d1 ♗c5 7.♘f3 ♘c6 8.♘c3 d6 9.e3 0-0 10.♗e2 ♗g4 11.h3 ♗d7 12.a3 a5 13.b3 ♕e8 14.♗b2 ♕g6 with compensation in Alterman-Kogan, Tel Aviv 1996) 5.♗d2 (or 5.♘d2 f5! 6.exf6 ♘xf6⩲) 5...♘xd2 6.♘xd2 ♘c6 7.♘f3 d6 8.exd6 ♗e6 9.dxc7 ♕xc7 10.♕g5 0-0 and even with two pawns down I would prefer Black here, what about you? A clue: look at the white king just to make your choice easier.

– 4.♕d4 ♗b4+ 5.♘c3 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♘c6 7.♕e3 ♗a5 seems to give Black very decent compensation (7...♗e7 is more risky but gave Black a nice win after 8.♕g3 ♔f8 9.♗f4 b6 10.♘f3 h6 11.h4 ♗a6 12.e4 ♗c5 13.h5 ♕c7 14.♘h4 ♕e6 15.♗e2 ♖e8 16.♗g4 ♕xc4 17.♕f3 ♔g8 18.e6 dxe6 19.e5 ♘b4! 0-1 Svela-Reefschläger, Gausdal 1990). If 8.♗a3 then Black goes 8...♕h4!.

– 4.♗f4 ♗b4+ 5.♘d2 ♘c6 6.♘f3 g5!? (6...♕c7) After this provocative move White lost quickly after: 7.♗g3 (7.♗e3 ♕e7) 7...g4 (7...♘d4! looks nice too, and there is also 7...h5) 8.♗h4? (8.a3) 8...f6 9.exf6 gxf3 10.f7+ ♔xf7 11.♗xd8 ♗xd2+ 12.♕xd2 ♘xd2 13.♗xc7 ♘xf1 14.gxf3 d5 15.cxd5 ♘b4 16.♔xf1 ♗h3+ 0-1 Ianov-Gutdeutsch, Koszeg 1996.

Variation A

4.a3

This is a main approach versus the Fajarowicz. White makes sure that he is not disturbed by a check on b4.

4...d6

It is logical to give our pieces more space and to try to use White's slow move. I consider the text to be the strongest move.

● Too 'creative' is 4...♕h4!? 5.g3 ♕h5 6.♗g2 ♕xe5 7.♕c2 ♘f6 8.♘f3 ♕h5 9.♘c3 ♗e7 10.h3 c6 11.e4± Van Wely-Alburt, New York 1994.

● Not too helpful was 4...a5 5.♕c2 d5 6.♘d2 ♗f5 7.♘xe4 ♗xe4 8.♕a4+ ♘c6 9.♗f4 g5 10.♗g3 ½-½ Drasko-Forgacs, Caorle 1989.

● 4...b6!? is in the article's spirit. The main idea of the ...b6 trap is 5.♕d5 (a funny game was 5.♕c2 ♗b7 6.♘c3 ♘xc3 7.♕xc3 a5 8.♘f3 ♗b4! 0-1 Schmied-Schlindwein, Untergrombach 2003) 5...♗b7! 6.♕xb7 ♘c6, when the white queen is in danger – ...♘c5, ...a6 or ...a5 are threats to White's queen. However after 7.♘c3!, a hard move

to find behind the board, but I must mention it here, the problem is that Black can't play ...♗b4.

– The point is that after 7...♘c5, 8.♗g5! saves the white queen and gives some edge for White: 8...♘xb7 9.♗xd8 ♔xd8 10.f4 ♘ba5 11.e3 ♘b3 12.♖d1 ♗c5 13.♔f2 g5 14.g3.

Other moves are also insufficient:

– 7...♘xc3 8.bxc3 a6 9.♗g5 ♗e7 10.♗xe7 ♔xe7 11.0-0-0 ♖a7 12.♕xc6.

– 7...♖b8 8.♕xb8 (8.♕a6 ♘c5) 8...♕xb8 9.♘xe4 and White will have an important material edge for the queen.

5.♘f3

Here 5.exd6 ♗xd6 6.♘d2 ♗f5 7.e3 ♕e7 8.♘gf3 ♘c6 9.♗e2 0-0-0 gave Black a nice initiative and a winning edge after: 10.0-0 ♖he8 11.♕b3 ♕f6 12.♘xe4 ♗xe4 13.♗d2 ♕h6 (13...♗xh2+! 14.♔xh2 ♗xf3 15.♗xf3 ♖xd2∓) 14.g3 ♕h3 15.♗c3 ♖e6 16.♖fd1 g5! 17.♖d2 g4 18.♘h4 ♖h6 19.f4 gxf3 20.♗f1 ♕g4 21.♖xd6 ♖dxd6 G.Buckley-T.Wall, England tt 1997/98.

5.♕c2 was played by GM Atalik, but it did not help him to win against a much lower rated player who surprised him with 5...d5!? (5...♗f5 seems very logical as well) 6.♘c3 (6.♘d2 ♗f5) 6...♘xc3 7.♕xc3 d4 8.♕g3 ♗e6 9.e4 ♘c6 10.♗d2 d3! 11.♗xd3 ♘xc5! 12.♗c2 ♘xc4 13.♗c3 ♗d6 14.♕xg7 ♗e5! 15.♕h6 ♗xc3+ 16.bxc3 ♕d6 17.♘e2 0-0-0 with excellent compensation in Atalik-Fette, Groningen 1999.

5...♘c6

A creative game was played by GM Gutman after 5...♗f5 6.g3 h5!? 7.♗g2 ♘c6 8.♘d4 ♘xd4 9.♕xd4 ♘c5 10.♕e3 dxe5 11.b4 ♘e6 12.♗b2 f6 13.♗xb7 ♖b8 14.♗e4 ♗c5! 15.♕f3 ♗g4 16.♗g6+ ♔e7 17.♕d3 ♕xd3 18.♗xd3 h4! 19.♘c3 a5 20.♘d5+ ♔f7 21.♗c3 c6 22.bxc5 cxd5 23.c6 d4 24.♗xa5 ♘c5 with compensation, Levin-Gutman, Altenkirchen ch-GER 2001.

6.exd6

6.♕c2 ♗f5 (not 6...♘c5 7.b4 ♘e6 8.♗b2 dxe5 9.e3 f6 10.♗d3 g6 11.h4 ♗g7 12.♘c3 f5 13.0-0-0 Garcia Vicente-Rogers, Las Palmas 1995) led to crazy complications after: 7.♘bd2 ♘g3 8.e4 ♘xh1 9.exf5 dxe5 10.♘e4 ♗e7 (play is unclear) 11.♗e3 0-0 (11...♕d7) 12.♔e2 (12.♗d3 g6 13.0-0-0) 12...♘d4+ 13.♗xd4 exd4 14.♖d1 c5 15.g4 ♗h4 16.♗g2 ♘xf2 17.♘xf2 ♖e8+ and Black won in Hermesmann-Bigalke, Hamburg 2001.

6...♗xd6 7.♘bd2

The blunder 7.g3? has occurred more than once in practice! Black has 7...♘xf2! since 8.♔xf2 is met by 8...♗xg3+ winning the queen.

7...♗f5

8.♘xe4

The natural 8.g3 is weak after 8...♗c5! 9.e3 ♕f6 (or 9...♕e7 10.♕e2 0-0-0 11.♘h4 ♘xd2 12.♗xd2 ♗e4 13.♕g4+ ♔b8 14.f3 f5 15.♕h3 ♗c2 16.e4 fxe4 17.♘f5 ♕d7 Garcia del Campo-Garcia Castro, Villagarcia de Arosa 2005) 10.♗g2 0-0-0 11.0-0 h5 with nice attacking chances. White now gave back the pawn, but was worse in Olsen-Conquest, Reykjavik 1996, after 12.♘d4 ♘xd2 13.♗xd2 ♘xd4 14.exd4 ♗xd4 15.♕f3 c6 16.♗e3 ♗xb2 17.♖a2 ♗d4 18.♖d2 ♗xe3 19.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 20.fxe3 ♗g6 with a big edge.

8...♗xe4

Black has a dangerous initiative as was confirmed in practice.

9.e3

Or 9.♕b3 ♕e7 10.♗e3 0-0 11.g3? (11.♘d2 ♖fe8) 11...♗xf3 12.exf3 ♘d4 13.♕d1 ♗b4+!! 0-1 Bjerring-Hvenekilde, Tastrup 1995.

9...♕e7 10.♘d2 0-0-0 11.♕a4 ♘d4! 12.♘xe4 ♕xe4 13.♔d1 ♘c2! 14.♕xc2 ♗b4+ 15.♗d2 ♖xd2+ 16.♕xd2 ♗xd2 17.♔xd2 ♖d8+ 18.♔c3 ♕e5+ 19.♔c2 ♕f5+ 20.♔c3 ♕f6+ 21.♔b3 ♖d2

And Black is winning, S.Bekker Jensen-Simonsen, Copenhagen 2000.

Variation B

4.♕c2

In my opinion Black now has two good options:

B1 4...♗b4+

B2 4...d5

In both cases Black develops quickly and obtains a highly dangerous initiative for the pawn.

Variation B1

4...♗b4+ 5.♘d2

Rather meek is 5.♗d2. After 5...♘xd2 6.♘xd2 ♘c6 7.♘f3 ♕e7 8.a3 ♗xd2+ 9.♕xd2 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 ♕xe5 11.e3 d6 12.♗e2 a5 13.0-0 a4 14.♖fd1 0-0 15.♖ac1 the position should be about equal, but the black pawn on a4 gives him some hope for the long-term fight. Black indeed won a nice game in Meins-Gutman, Höckendorf 2004. Black is also fine after 5.♘c3 d5

– 6.exd6 ♗f5! worked well against the Rus-

sian (now French) GM after 7.♗d2 ♘xd6 8.e4 ♗xc3 9.♗xc3 ♗xe4 10.♕d2 0-0 11.0-0-0 ♘a6 (11...♘d7) 12.♕f4 ♕e8 13.b3 ♗g6 14.♗d3 ♘c5 15.♕d4 ♘xd3+ 16.♖xd3 f6 17.♕d5+ and now instead of 17...♕f7 18.♕xf7+ and draw agreed in Vaisser-Vökler, Groningen 1991, Black should have played 17...♔h8! with a clear edge.

– 6.cxd5 ♕xd5 7.♗d2 ♕xd2+! 8.♕xd2 ♘xd2 9.♔xd2 ♘c6 10.♘f3 ♗g4 and Black regained the pawn with a nice initiative to win the endgame! Cruz Lopez Claret-Bellon Lopez, Lleida ch-ESP 1991.

5...d5!

Here too this active pawn thrust is the right method.

6.♘f3

Not 6.exd6 ♗f5! which simply favours Black:

– Cooperative is 7.dxc7 ♕xc7 8.♕a4+ ♘c6 9.♘f3 0-0-0 10.a3 ♗xd2+ 11.♗xd2 ♘xd2 12.♘xd2 ♖xd2 13.♔xd2 ♕e5 winning, Müs-Reinhardt, cr 1934.

– However, White did not fare any better in Pöltl-Cigan, Gleisdorf 1989, with 7.♕a4+ ♘c6 8.♘f3 ♕xd6 9.a3 ♘c5 10.♕d1 0-0-0 11.e3 ♖he8 12.♗e2 ♘d3+ 13.♗xd3 ♗xd3 14.♕b3 ♘d4 15.axb4 ♘xb3 0-1.

6...♘c6 7.e3

7...♗g4!?

This is the most aggressive move, but some home analysis is required in the complications that follow. My way to play would be the 'simple' 7...♗f5 8.♗d3 0-0 with compensation.

8.cxd5 ♗xf3 9.dxc6

Otherwise Black is just better.

9...♕h4 10.g3 ♘xg3 11.fxg3 ♕h6

– The sacrifice worked well in Stohl-Trapl, Namestovo 1987, after 12.♗b5 ♕xe3+ 13.♔f1 0-0 14.♘xf3 ♕xf3+ 15.♔g1 ♗a5! Black now has a great attack and won following 16.h3 ♕xg3+ 17.♕g2 ♕e1+ 18.♕f1 ♕g3+ 19.♕g2 ♕xe5 20.♕e2 ♗b6+ 21.♔g2 ♕d5+ 22.♔h2 ♖ae8 23.♕c4 ♕e5+ 24.♔g2 ♖e6! and so on.

– Stronger is 12.♕b3!, and now rather than 12...0-0 13.♖g1 ♗xd2+ 14.♗xd2 ♕xh2 15.e4! ♕xg1 16.♕xf3± Finegold-Vökler, Groningen 1990, I would recommend 12...♗xd2+ 13.♗xd2 ♗xh1 14.cxb7 ♖b8.

Variation B2

4...d5!? 5.♘d2

Other options include:

– Short and nice was 5.e3 ♘c6 6.a3 ♗f5 7.♕a4 ♘c5 8.♕d1 dxc4 9.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 10.♗xc4 ♘xe5 11.♘d2 ♘xc4 12.♘xc4 ♘b3 0-1 Asensio Soto-Granados Gomez, Cordoba 1995.

– 5.♘f3 ♗f5 6.♕d1 ♘c6 7.e3 ♗b4+

8.♘bd2 d4 9.exd4 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 ♗xd2+ 11.♗xd2 ♕xd4 12.♗e3 ♕xb2 13.♕d4 ♕b4+ 14.♗d2 ♘xd2 15.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 16.♔xd2 0-0-0+ 17.♔c3 ♖he8 and having regained the pawn, Black has a clear edge in the ending. Vazquez-Liascovich, Buenos Aires 2001.

– 5.exd6 ♗f5 6.♘c3 ♘xd6 7.e4 ♘xe4 8.♘xe4 ♗b4+ 9.♗d2 (9.♔e2 0-0 gives Black too strong an attack) 9...♗xd2+ 10.♕xd2 ♗xe4 11.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 12.0-0-0+ ♔c8 with equality in Alber-Trapl, Litomerice 1990.

5...♗f5 6.♕a4+ ♘c6 7.♘gf3 ♘c5

Forcing a favourable ending.

8.♕d1 dxc4 9.♘xc4 ♕xd1+ 10.♔xd1

After 10...♘e4 11.♔e1 ♗b4+ 12.♗d2 ♘xd2 13.♘cxd2 0-0-0 14.a3 Tabernig-Schlindwein, Austria tt-2 2000/01, Black should have played 14...♗xd2+ 15.♘xd2 ♘xe5 with a slight plus, rather than 14...♘d4 which led to equality.

In fact, I would prefer the even more ambitious 10...0-0-0+ 11.♗d2 (11.♔e1 ♗e6 12.e3 ♘b4) 11...♘e4 12.♔e1 b5 13.♘e3 ♗e6 14.a3 ♘xd2 15.♘xd2 ♘xe5 with a great game for Black.

Variation C

4.♘d2 ♘c5

The main line, but 4...♗b4 deserves attention. Now 5.♕c2 transposes to a previous line. Of independent interest is 5.g3 b6!? (not 5...♘c6 6.♗g2 ♘xd2 7.♗xd2 ♕e7 8.f4 g5 9.♗xb4 ♕xb4+ 10.♕d2 ♕xc4 11.♖c1 ♕xa2 12.♘f3 g4 13.♘g5± Larsen-Romero Holmes, Mesa 1992; but 5...d6 is an alternative). With this original move GM Lopez Bellon once again managed to surprise another solid GM. After 6.♗g2 ♗b7 7.f3 ♘xd2 8.♗xd2 ♕e7 9.e4 ♘c6 10.♘e2 ♘xe5 Black was already better. After the further 11.0-0 ♘xc4 12.♗xb4 ♕xb4 13.♕d4 c5 14.♕xg7 ♕xb2 15.♕xb2 ♘xb2 16.♘c3 ♗c6 17.f4 0-0-0 he was pawn up in the ending. Epishin-Bellon Lopez, Malaga 2000.

5.♘gf3 ♘c6 6.e3

● 6.g3 d6 (or 6...♕e7 7.♗g2 g6!? 8.0-0 ♗g7 9.♘b3 ♘e6 10.♗e3 0-0 11.♕d5 a5 12.♘c5? ♘b4 13.♘xe6 ♘xd5 14.♗c5 ♕xe6 15.cxd5 ♕xd5 16.♗xf8 ♔xf8–+ Perez-Zapata, Havana 2001) 7.exd6 ♗xd6 8.♗g2 ♗f5 9.0-0 ♕e7 10.♘b3 0-0-0 11.♗e3 h5 with unclear play in Cosma-Stefanova, Niksic 1994.

● 6.b3 g5! 7.♗b2 ♗g7 8.e3 d6

– 9.♘d4 ♘b4 (or simply 9...♘xe5) 10.♘2f3 dxe5 11.a3 ♘ba6 12.h4 exd4 13.bxc5 g4 14.♘xd4 0-0 15.g3 c6 16.♕c2 ♘xc5 17.0-0-0 ♕a5 with counterplay, Black won eventually in Ulko-Gorbatow, Moscow 1997.

– 9.♗e2 dxe5 10.0-0 ♗f5 11.b4?! ♘xb4 12.♗xe5 ♗xe5 13.♘xe5 ♕d6! 14.e4 (14.♘df3 f6) 14...♕xe5 15.exf5 0-0-0! 16.♗f3 ♕c3! with a superb position in Demirel-Kogan, Vlissingen 1996.

6...g5!?

This is a typical idea that I used more than once in this opening! Even if it looks risky, it also poses White some very concrete problems.

Another 'normal way' to continue is 6...d6. While 6...g6 7.♘b3 ♘xb3 8.♕xb3 ♗g7 9.♗d2 ♕e7 10.♗c3 0-0 11.♗e2 b6 12.0-0 ♗b7 13.♖fd1 ♖ad8 14.♖ac1 ♘xe5 15.♘xe5 ♗xe5 16.c5 ♕g5 17.♗f1 ♗xc3 18.♕xc3 ♗c6 was solid for Black who eventually drew in Psakhis-Zapata, Las Vegas 1999.

7.h3 ♗g7 8.♘d4 ♘xe5 9.♘2f3 d6 10.♕c2 ♕f6!?

Also playable is 10...♕e7.

11.♗e2 h5 12.♖b1 g4 13.hxg4 hxg4 14.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 15.♘d2 g3!

With a promising position for Black, Zournatsidis-Kogan, Athens 1999.

Variation D

4.♘f3

The most normal move, but since Black did not attack the e5 pawn, White has a big choice as we have seen.

4...b6!?

This move which I played successfully a couple of times is what I offer you here. Black wants to finish his development and prepare to castle queenside when the bishop on b7 might be a very important piece for attacking the white king!

Another advantage of 4...b6 is that it contains a deadly trap.

● In fact the main line with 4...♗b4+ is also quite playable. Bellon Lopez is the main advocate of this variation with many interesting games against strong players.

Let us investigate: 4...♗b4+ 5.♘bd2 (here 5.♗d2 ♘xd2 6.♘bxd2 ♘c6 7.a3 transposes) 5...♘c6

Now White's main move is 6.a3. Other moves are less critical. For example:

– 6.g3 d6 (6...♕e7 7.♗g2 ♘xe5 8.0-0 ♘xd2 9.♗xd2 ♘xf3+ 10.♗xf3 ♗xd2 11.♕xd2 0-0 led to equality in Dreev-Kahn, ICC 2003) 7.exd6 ♕xd6 8.a3 ♕c5 9.e3 ♗xd2+ 10.♘xd2 ♘xd2 11.♗xd2 ♗e6 with compensation in Mandelbaum-Bisguier, Helsinki ol 1952.

– 6.e3 ♕e7 7.♗e2 b6 8.0-0 ♘xd2 9.♗xd2 ♗xd2 10.♕xd2 ♗b7 11.♕c3 0-0-0 12.♖ac1 ♖he8 13.c5 ♔b8 14.♖fd1 g5 with counterplay in Campos Moreno-Vega Holm, Santiago 1995.

So White should play 6.a3 when the following line is forced: 6...♘xd2 7.♗xd2 ♗xd2+ 8.♕xd2 ♕e7 9.♕c3 (otherwise Black

would just take back on e5 with an easy game) 9...b6

This is a critical position for 4...♗b4+. In practice Black has done well:

– 10.g3 ♗b7 11.♗h3 0-0-0 12.0-0-0 ♖he8 13.♖d5 ♘b8 14.♖d3 ♗xf3 15.♖xf3 ♕c5! 16.♖xf7? (a blunder, necessary was 16.♖d1) 16...♕c6! 17.♖d1 ♕h6+ 18.f4 ♕xh3 and Black won in Ionescu-Bellon Lopez, Bern 1992.

– 10.e3 ♗b7 11.♗e2 0-0-0 12.0-0-0 g5 (or 12...♖he8 13.♖d5 ♘b8 14.♖d2 ♘c6 15.♖d5 ♘b8 16.♖d2 ♘c6 ½-½ Oms Pallise-Narciso Dublan, Paretana 2000) 13.h3 h5 14.♗d3 ♖he8 15.♗e4 ♘xe5 16.♗xb7+ ♔xb7 17.♘xe5 ♕xe5 18.♕xe5 ♖xe5 with an equal game. Summermatter-Bellon Lopez, Bern 1995.

● Bellon Lopez has also played 4...♘c6. To give one example: 5.a3 (5.♘bd2) 5...a5 6.e3 g6!? 7.♗d3 ♘c5 8.e4 ♗g7 9.♗g5 ♘xd3+ 10.♕xd3 ♘xe5! 11.♕d5 ♘xf3+ 12.gxf3 ♗f6 13.♗xf6 ♕xf6 which was fine in Gonzalez Velez-Bellon Lopez, Terrassa 1994.

5.♘bd2

● White can prevent any unpleasantness on b4 with 5.a3. After 5...♗b7 there can follow:

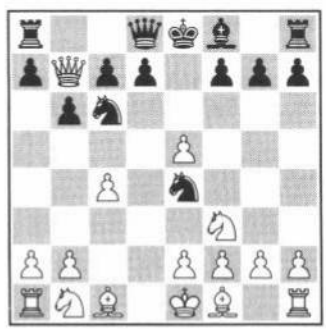
– 6.e3 ♘c6 7.b3 ♕e7 8.♗b2 0-0-0 9.♕c2 ♘g5 10.♗e2 ♘xf3+ 11.♗xf3 ♘xe5 12.♗xb7+ ♔xb7 13.♘c3 (13.♕e4+ ♘c6) 13...♕e6 14.♕e4+ c6 15.♘e2 ♘g6 16.♕c2 ♘h4 with counterplay in Sarmiento Alfonso-Romero Holmes, Mesa 1992.

– 6.♘bd2 looks best. Now 6...♕e7 7.♕c2 ♘xd2 8.♗xd2 ♘c6 9.♗c3 was clearly better for White, Hillarp Persson-Romero Holmes, Benidorm 2003. The same goes for 6...a5 7.♘xe4 ♗xe4 8.♕d4 ♗b7 9.♕g4, Eliet-Herbrechtsmeier, France tt 2001. Perhaps some black players will like 6...f5.

However, my personal favourite is 6...♘c5 7.b4 ♘e6 with the idea of ...g5-g4 with ...♗g7 coming up. Black has typical compensation!

● 5.♕d5 is the big question! What about this double threat?

However, this is what we have been waiting for: 5...♗b7! 6.♕xb7 ♘c6. A piece down, Black is trapping the queen with a slow move! Now ...♘c5 is one threat and more hidden one's are ...a5 or ...a6 with the idea of ...♖a7! Very tricky, right?



I analyse:

– 7.♘d4 ♗b4+ 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♘xc6 dxc6 10.a3 ♘xc3 11.♗d2 (11.f4 ♕d1+ 12.♔f2 ♗c5+ 13.♔f3 ♘xe2) 11...♘e4 12.♗xb4 ♕d4.

– 7.♕a6 ♗b4+! (7...♘c5 8.♕a3) 8.♗d2 ♘c5 9.♕b5 ♗xd2+ 10.♘bxd2 a6! and surprisingly the queen is lost! This is the main trap and at least one of my students was already happy to catch his opponent in this way!

– 7.♗e3 ♗b4+ (7...a6 8.♘d4 ♗b4+ 9.♘c3) 8.♘c3 ♘xc3 9.a3 ♘a5 10.♕a6 ♘d5+ 11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♘xd2 ♘f4 13.e3 ♘e6 14.b4 ♘c6 with compensation.

5...♗b7 6.e3

White has other options of course. I won quite a few rapid games with 6.♘xe4 ♗xe4 7.a3 ♘c6 8.♗f4 f6! with excellent counterplay.

6...g5!?

This was my provocative novelty, and although I can't say that objectively it is the best move in the position, I can assure you that it will be a SOS bomb that will shake your opponent. Just look at what happened in the present game.

Other possibilities are: 6...♘c5 7.b4 ♘e6 8.♖b1 a5 9.b5 d6, 6...♗b4, and 6...a5!?.

7.♘xe4 ♗xe4 8.♕d4

White can't resist and tries to punish my suspicious ...g5 move! If 8.♗d3 then 8...♗b4+. In case of 8.c6 Black goes 8...f6! 9.exd7+ ♘xd7 with ...♕e7 and ...0-0-0 and some compensation against a worried white king.

8...♗xf3!?

But not 8...♗b7 9.c6! f6 10.♘xg5.

9.e6

The real test was 9.gxf3 ♘c6 (9...♗b4+ 10.♔e2 ♘c6 11.♕d5) 10.♕d5 ♗b4+ 11.♔e2 (11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♔xd2 ♕e7 13.f4 gxf4 14.exf4 0-0-0 with compensation because ...f6 is coming) 11...a5!? (11...f6 12.e6) 12.a3 ♗c5 with ...♕e7 and a possible ...f6 and Black is still in the game.

9...♗b4+! 10.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 11.♔xd2 dxe6

The surprise is that the white queen is pinned!

12.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 13.gxf3 ♘d7

And suddenly Black has got a better endgame! White quickly succumbed after:

14.h4 gxh4 15.♖xh4 ♔e7 16.♗e2 ♖ad8 17.♖h6 ♖hg8 18.♖f1 e5 19.♔e1 ♘f6 20.♗d1 ♖d6! 21.♖fh1 ♖gd8 22.♗b3 ♖d2

White's position is hopeless.

23.♖xf6 ♔xf6 24.♖xh7 ♖xb2 25.c5 ♔g6 26.♖h4 ♖dd2 0-1

Castany Pampalona-Kogan, Manresa 1997.

CHAPTER 8

Jeroen Bosch

French Prophylaxis

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6!?

In Volume 2 of the SOS series I wrote on 3...h6 in the French. A useful waiting move that had found favour in the eyes of GMs like Legky and Eingorn. This time I would like to return to the French Defence with yet another waiting move: 3...a6.

The main ideas behind the 3...a6 system are close to those behind 3...h6. After the natural 4.♘f3 Black has 4...♘f6 when 5.e5 can be answered by 5...♘fd7 when in the resulting French middlegame White's knight is slightly misplaced on f3 (White cannot play f4).

Likewise, Black may profit after another developing move – 4.♗d3 – with 4...♘c6 (attacking pawn d4) when the main line goes 5.♘f3 ♘b4 and if the bishop retreats then 6...♘f6 7.e5 ♘c4 may follow. We will of course analyse both 4.♘f3 and 4.♗d3 in more detail – they remain White's most important answers to 3...a6 despite the fact that it could be argued that Black's prophylactic strategy can be successfully executed against both moves.

In practice White has often gone for 4.exd5 exd5 5.♕f3 as well (similar to a Larsen system versus the Winawer) arguing that 3...a6 is a complete waste of time. However, it should be pointed out that the knight on c3 is misplaced in these French Exchange lines and Black has no problems after this approach.

The 3...a6 system is mainly adopted by French GM Eric Prié and Ukrainian GM Nikolay Legky. Both have upheld this line on numerous occasions over the course of time. Legky, plays both 3...h6 and 3...a6 which might illustrate that both waiting moves are of equal merit. While 3...h6 protects the g5-square (thus avoiding the pin on the f6-knight with a possible ♗g5, and ♘g5 in some lines), the move 3...a6 protects square b5 which makes an early ...c5 more attractive as ♗b5+ is not on the cards. I can recommend 3...a6 as more than a surprise weapon, and it certainly makes sense to combine both early rook-pawn moves in your repertoire as Legky does.

□ **Khandzhar Odeev**
■ **Nikolay Legky**
Odessa 1991

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6 4.exd5

A belated Exchange Variation. This is not critical in my opinion, but you will certainly encounter this in practice when you start playing 3...a6. Minor alternatives include:
– 4.♗e3 (best of the rest) 4...♗b4 (in a Winawer it is not clear what the bishop is doing on e3. Worse is 4...♘f6 5.e5. 4.♗e3 also has the merit of protecting pawn d4 and preventing an early ...c5) 5.e5 ♘e7 6.a3 ♗xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♗d7!? (7...c5; 7...♘f5 8.♘f3) 8.♘f3 ♗b5 (it could be argued that this manoeuvre is another point of 3...a6, but in all honesty you won't find many games in this chapter where this was possible. It may remind you though of SOS-6 Chapter 14 – the French Advance with 4...♗d7 and 5...a6) 9.♗xb5+ axb5 10.0-0 c6 and Black had a pleasant structural advantage in Van den Bergh-Prié, cr 1991.
– 4.a3 (anything you can do...) 4...♘f6 (the Rubinstein approach 4...dxe4 5.♘xe4 ♗e7 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.♗d3 ♘xe4 8.♗xe4 c5 9.0-0 was slightly better for White in Lanka-Prié, Paris 1990) 5.e5 (or 5.♗g5 ♗e7 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.♗xe7 ♕xe7 8.f4 c5 9.♘f3 ♘c6 with a normal French position – from the Classical 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e5 line – where Black's ...a6 is slightly more useful than White's a3. 10.♕d2 0-0 (10...cxd4 11.♘xd4 ♘dxe5) 11.♗e2 cxd4 12.♘xd4 ♘dxe5! 13.♘f5 exf5 14.♘xd5 ♕c5 15.fxe5 ♗e6 was more or less winning for Black in Horak-Trapl, Teplice 2007) 5...♘fd7 6.♘f3 c5 7.dxc5 ♗xc5 8.♗d3 ♘c6 9.♗f4 was an innocent line from the French between two future super GMs. Guseinov-Radjabov, Moscow 1997.
– 4.g3 ♘f6 (or even 4...b5?! 5.♗g2 ♗b7 6.exd5 ♘e7!? 7.♘f3 ♘xd5 8.♘e4 ♘d7 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♕d3 0-0 which was fairly decent in Rantanen-Legky, Jyväskylä 2007) 5.♗g2 dxe4 6.♘xe4 ♘xe4 7.♗xe4 c5 8.♘e2 was equal at this stage in Fernandez Garcia-Prié, Leon 1991.
– 4.e5 c5 Perfectly viable. White cannot protect d4 with his c-pawn and 3...a6 is useful. 5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.dxc5 ♗xc5 7.♗d3 f6 8.♗f4?! g5!? (8...fxe5 9.♘xe5 is met by 9...♕f6!, and 9.♗xe5 ♘xe5 10.♘xe5 by 10...♕g5) 9.exf6? (the attack is illusory 9.♗g3 g4 10.♘d2 had to be tried) 9...gxf4 10.♘g5 ♘xf6 11.♕d2 e5 and Black won in Bourne-Tiller, England tt-2 2000/01.

4...exd5 5.♕f3

This gives the whole line some bite. It closely resembles Larsen's 3...♗b4 4.exd5 exd5 5.♕f3!?, when Larsen-Portisch, Amsterdam 1964, went 5...♘c6 6.♗b5!. This demonstrates the usefulness of 3...a6 once again. Legky has 5...♘c6 in the game.

Other approaches are completely innocuous:

– 5.♗d3 ♘c6 6.♘ge2 ♗e7 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.♗g5 ♘b4 9.♖e1 0-0 10.♘g3 h6 11.♗f4 ♗g4 12.♕d2 ♘xd3 13.♕xd3 ♕d7 was, if anything, better for Black who went on to win in Poirier-Prié, cr 1991.

– 5.♗f4 ♘f6 6.♕d2 ♗b4 7.f3 0-0 8.0-0-0 ♘bd7 9.h4 b5 10.h5 ♘b6 11.♔b1 (11.h6) 11...♖b8 12.♘ge2 ♘c4 13.♕d3 a5 14.g4 ♗a6 15.g5 ♗xc3 16.♕xc3 b4 with double-edged play, Landa-Legky, France 2002.

5...♘c6

The most aggressive line, although Black was fine too after 5...♗e6 6.♗d3 ♘c6 7.♘ge2 ♘f6 8.h3 ♘b4! 9.0-0 ♘xd3 Armanda-Kovacevic, Kastela 2002.

6.♗e3

Exchanging the d-pawns is dangerous for White: 6.♘xd5 ♘xd4 (6...♗e6 7.♘e3 ♕xd4 8.♘e2 ♕e5 9.g3 ♘f6 10.♗g2 0-0-0 is also promising for Black, Herb-Legky, Mulhouse 2000) 7.♕e4+ ♗e6 and now:

– 8.♘xc7+ ♕xc7 9.♕xd4 and Black has satisfactory replies in the form of 9...♘f6, 9...♕xc2 and 9...♖d8.

– 8.♕xd4 ♕xd5 9.♕xd5 ♗xd5 10.♗e3 is equal.

– 8.♘e3?! ♘c6 9.♘e2 ♘f6 10.♕f3 ♗b4+! 11.♘c3 (11.c3? ♘e5) 11...♕e7 12.♗d2 ♗g4 13.♕g3 0-0-0 with a big edge for Black, Birmingham-Prié, Angers ch-FRA 1990.

6.♘ge2? is awkward after 6...♘b4! 7.♔d1 ♘e7 8.a3 ♘bc6 9.♗e3 h5 10.h3 ♗g4! 11.♕f4 ♘g6 12.♕g5 ♕xg5 13.♗xg5 ♗e6 14.g3 f6 15.♗e3 0-0-0 with a slight edge for Black. Dutreeuw-Legky, Asti 1995.

6...♘f6 7.h3

Necessary in order to prevent ...♗g4 and to be able to castle queenside, which must be the whole idea of 5.♕f3.

7...♗e7

Not the only move in this position:

– 7...♗b4?! 8.♗d3 0-0 9.♘e2 ♘e4 10.♗xe4 dxe4 11.♕xe4 ♖e8 12.♕d3 ♕f6 13.0-0-0 ♗f5 14.♘d5! and Black did not have enough for the pawn in Chandler-Hodgson, London 1991.

– 7...♗e6 8.g4 ♗e7 9.♘ge2 ♘e4! 10.♗g2 ♘b4!? was Dornont-Legky, France 2006.

8.0-0-0 0-0 9.g4

Castling on opposite sides nearly always leads to exciting chess. Here Black is more conventionally placed, while White has his queen on the kingside and advanced his g-pawn.

9...♗e6 10.♘ge2 ♘e4! 11.♘xe4 dxe4 12.♕g2

Not 12.♕xe4? because of 12...♗d5.

12...♗xa2! 13.♘c3

Black is a pawn up after 13.d5 ♘b4 14.♘c3 ♗xd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♕xe4 ♘c3! 17.♖xd8 ♘xe4 18.♖xa8 ♖xa8 19.♗g2. **13...♗d5 14.♘xd5** 14.♘xe4 ♖e8 also favours Black. **14...♕xd5 15.♗d3**

White must have counted on this move, hoping to retrieve the pawn with a pair of bishops as one of his assets. Legky now uses the

momentum to set up a menacing attack. **15...♘b4! 16.♗xe4?!** Correct was 16.♕xe4 ♘xd3+ 17.♕xd3 which leaves Black somewhat better. **16...♕a5 17.c3 ♕a1+ 18.♗b1 ♘a2+ 19.♔c2 ♗a3**

A funny position. Legky has voluntarily cornered his own pieces, but the attack is dangerous and defending such positions is usually not given to mere mortals.

20.♗c1 The insane 20.♕xb7 is what Rybka wants to play in this position with some amazing lines that are beyond the scope of this book on openings. **20...♖fe8 21.♖he1 ♘xc1 22.bxa3 ♖e2+! 23.♖xe2 ♘xe2 24.♕f3 ♖e8** Now 25.♖d2 was correct with approximately equal chances after 25...♘f4 26.♕xf4 ♖e1 and the resulting queen ending should be a draw. Instead the game went: **25.♔b3? g6 26.d5 b5 27.♕d3 a5 28.♕d2 b4! 29.cxb4?** Stronger was 29.axb4 axb4 30.cxb4 when the attack goes on after 30...♕a7. **29...a4+! 30.♔c4 ♕xa3 31.♕d3 ♕b2 32.♗c2 a3** The a-pawn lures White's queen away. **33.♕b3 ♕e5 34.♕xa3 ♕f4+ 35.♔b3 ♕xf2** Black is ready for the final assault. **36.♕a4 ♖e3+ 37.♗d3 ♘f4** 37...♕f6. **38.♕b5 ♕f3** 38...♕e2. **39.♔c2 ♘xd3 40.♖xd3 ♕e2+ 41.♔c3 ♕e1+ 42.♔d4 ♖e4+** and mates.

□ **Miroslav Zufic**
■ **Nikolay Legky**
Cappelle la Grande 2003

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6 4.♗d3 ♘c6

Another idea to make use of 3...a6 is 4...c5. This is less attractive though because of 5.dxc5 ♗xc5 6.exd5 (nothing much is gained by 6.♘f3 ♘f6 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.exd5. In Wyss-Tiller, Davos 2005, play slowly turned in Black's favour after 8.e5 ♘d7 9.♖e1 ♗e7 10.♗f4 ♘c5 11.♗f1 b5 12.a3 ♗b7 13.♕d2 h6 14.♖ad1 g5!? 15.♗g3 h5) 6...exd5 7.♘xd5! ♗xf2+ 8.♔xf2 ♕xd5 9.♕f3 ♘f6 10.♕xd5 ♘xd5 11.♘f3 0-0 12.a3 ♘c6 13.h3 h6 14.♗d2 and the pair of bishops and the majority on the queenside guarantees White a long-term edge, Rantanen-Kovacevic, Palma de Mallorca 1989.

If Black wants to make anything of 4...c5 then he should investigate 5...♘f6!? 6.exd5 ♘xd5, as 7.♘xd5 ♕xd5 8.♕f3 ♕xf3 9.♘xf3 ♗xc5 10.♗f4 ♘c6 11.c3 f6 was equal in Helfi-Prié, Challes 1990. Possible improvements are 7.♘e4!? and 7.♘ge2 ♗xc5 8.♘xd5 ♕xd5 (8...exd5) 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘c3 with a slight edge. Dubious is 5...d4 as 6.♘a4 ♘d7 7.b4 b6 8.cxb6 ♘xb6 9.♘c5 ♘d7 10.♘xd7 ♗xb4+ 11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♕xd2 ♗xd7 13.♘f3 ♗c6 14.♕b4 clearly favoured White in Koch-Prié, Angers ch-FRA 1990.

5.♘f3

Defending pawn d4 in the most natural way. 5.♘ge2 allows Black to execute his strategical idea to capture the bishop with 5...♘b4 after 6.0-0 ♗e7 7.♘g3 ♘xd3 8.cxd3!? ♘f6 9.e5 ♘g8!? 10.♔h1 ♗d7 11.♗e3 ♗f8!? 12.♖c1 White had a huge edge in development, but Black was structurally better. The game Herbrechtsmeier-Legky, France 2002, continued 12...h5 13.♘ge2 ♘h6 14.f3 ♘f5 15.♗f2 ♕g5 16.♘g1 ♗c6 and Black was better.

5...♘b4

This is the crux. Black is going after the light-squared bishop, and if it retreats then 6...♘f6 increases the pressure on point e4.

6.♗e2

Keeping the bishop. There is something to be said for 6.0-0 ♘f6 7.e5 ♘xd3 (7...♘d7 8.♘g5! ♘xd3 9.cxd3 ♗e7 10.♕h5 g6 11.♕h6 ♗f8 12.♕h3 ♗g7 13.b3 was very good for White in Glek-Legky, Douai 1993) 8.cxd3 ♘g8 when White is playing a middlegame, while Black still has to develop all his pieces (having exchanged one knight and 'undeveloped' another). Yet, these French structures are resilient, and it is not so easy to breach Black's fortress. Black managed to develop all his pieces after 9.♗f4 ♗e7 10.b4 ♗d7 11.♖b1 ♕b8 12.♕c2 ♗d8 13.a4 ♘e7 14.b5 0-0 15.bxa6 ♖xa6 in Acher-Legky, Cannes 1999, when the stronger player went on to win.

6...♘f6

7.e5

Taking up space and establishing the typical French pawn chain.

● Fairly innocent is **7.exd5** ♘bxd5 8.♘xd5 exd5 9.0-0 ♗e7 (9...♗d6 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 0-0 was Tregubov-Bauer, Clichy 2004) 10.♘e5 ♗f5 11.♗e3 h6 12.c3 0-0 13.♕b3 ♖b8 14.♖ae1 ♗d6 15.♕d1 c6 with equal play in Dubois-Prié, France 1991.

● More interesting than 7.exd5 is **7.♗g5**. At least White takes advantage of Black's omission of 3...h6 in favour of 3...a6! Now **7...h6** more or less forces 8.♗xf6 ♕xf6 9.a3 dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♕g6 11.axb4 ♕xe4 12.c3, when Black has the bishop pair, but White has more space and a slightly superior structure. White should be somewhat better. After 12...♗d6 13.0-0 0-0

practice has seen:

– 14.♖e1 ♕f4 15.♗d3 ♗d7 16.♘e5 ♗b5 17.g3 ♕g5 18.h4 ♕e7 19.♗b1 ♖fd8 20.♕c2, with a large advantage in Odeev-Yu Shaoteng, Jodhpur Ach-tt 2003.

– 14.♗d3 ♕f4 15.g3 ♕f6 16.♕e2 ♗d7 17.♘e5 ♖fd8 18.♘xd7 ♖xd7 19.b5 a5 20.♗e4 (20.♕e4! would have been very unpleasant for Black) 20...♖a7 21.f4 ♖d8 22.♕g2 ♖b8, Bellamine-Legky, Metz 2001. Black won in the end!

● After **7.♗g5** Black also has **7...♗e7** which I prefer over 7...h6. After 8.e5 ♘e4

9.♗xe7 ♕xe7 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♘d2 e3! (11...♕g5 12.♘xe4 – or 12.0-0 e3 13.♘e4 – 12...♕xg2 13.♗f3 ♕g6 14.c3±) 12.fxe3 (12.♘f3 exf2+ 13.♔xf2 c5) 12...♘d5 13.♔f2 ♕g5 14.♘f1 f6 15.c4 (15.h4 ♕h6 16.c4 ♘b6) 15...♘b6 16.exf6 (16.h4; 16.c5) 16...0-0, with a lot of fun for the pawn, Romero Holmes-Prié, Leon 1991.

As an afterthought, perhaps it is interesting to investigate 7...dxe4!? 8.♘xe4 ♗c7.

7...♘e4 8.0-0

Considering the next comment it does not make any sense to play 8.a3 forcing 8...♘xc3 9.bxc3 ♘c6 after 10.0-0 ♘a5.

We have reached a position that is similar to Gashimov-Eingorn, Bled Olympiad 2002 – see SOS-2, Chapter 8 – there is only one difference: in Gashimov-Eingorn the a-pawn is still on a7 while the h-pawn is on h6! Indeed, in that game 3...h6 was played instead of 3...a6. Gashimov chose 11.♕d3 but Black was fine after 11...♗d7 12.♘e1 c5 13.f4 ♕c7.

I like Pieri's 11.♘e1 better than 11.♕d3 – White immediately starts the plan of preparing to march his f-pawn. However, with the a-pawn on the sixth rank rather than the h-pawn the more aggressive 11.♘g5 is also an option. 11.♘e1 c5 12.f4 g6 13.♘f3 ♕c7 14.♗e3 ♗d7 15.♔h1 cxd4 (also interesting is 15...0-0-0 16.♘g5 – 16.a4!? – 16...♗a4) 16.cxd4 ♖c8 (16...♗a4; 16...♘c4) 17.♗d3 ♗b5?! and, although he later lost, Black was doing fine at this stage in Pieri-Legky, Milan 1992.

8...♘c6

Black voluntarily retreats his knight to c6 blocking his own c-pawn which is dying to advance to c5. The reason is very concrete, for, after 8...c5 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 White has 12.♘g5! when 12...♘xc2 13.♘xf7+ ♔e8 14.♘xh8 ♘xa1 15.♗e3 ♗xe3 16.fxe3 led to a very difficult ending for Black in Lutz-Legky, France 2002. Here we see a vital difference between 3...a6 and 3...h6. In case of the latter Black can play 8...c5 after 8.0-0 because White's knight has no access to g5. That is not to say that 3...h6 is stronger than 3...a6. Both moves, however similar strategically, simply have their own merits.

9.♗e3

White develops a piece while giving his d4-pawn some additional coverage (*Überdeckung*). Yet, I am not sure if this is best. 9.♘b1!? is met by 9...f6. But 9.♗d3 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♘a5 (perhaps Black should settle for 10...♗e7 first) 11.♘g5 is a normal approach – again highlighting the fact that square g5 is not protected.

9...♘xc3 10.bxc3

10...♘a5

Also playable is 10...♗e7 11.♘d2 ♘a5 12.f4 ♗d7 13.c4 dxc4 14.♘xc4 ♘xc4 15.♗xc4 and now Prié demonstrated the usefulness of 3...a6 with 15...♗b5! when after 16.♗d3 c5 17.dxc5 ♕c7 18.♗xb5+ axb5 19.♕d3 the players agreed a draw in Kindermann-Prié, Uzes 1990.

11.♘d2 ♕d7!?

Alternatives include 11...♗d7 and 11...♗e7. White now improves his pawn structure by pushing his c-pawn, but this does not bring him any advantage in the game.

12.c4 ♘xc4 13.♘xc4 dxc4 14.♗xc4 b5 15.♗d3 ♗b7

Black has reasonable counterplay due to his control of the long diagonal. We are passed the opening stage and I give the remainder of the game with some brief notes. **16.♕g4 g6 17.f3!?** Shortening the diagonal. **17...♗g7 18.a4 0-0 19.♖fb1 ♗c6 20.axb5 axb5 21.♗e4 ♗d5 22.♗xd5 ♕xd5** Due to Black's better control over the white squares and his slightly superior bishop, Legky's chances are somewhat preferable. **23.♕e4 ♖a4 24.♕d3 ♖c4 25.♖a5 ♖b8 26.♕b3 c6 27.c3 ♗f8 28.♕b2 ♕d8 29.♖ba1 h5 30.♕b3 ♔g7 31.♖a7 ♕d5 32.♖c7 ♖a4! 33.♕d1 ♕c4 34.♖c1?! ♖a2** Black has visually improved his position, but White retains counterplay. **35.♕e1 ♔g8 36.♕h4 ♕e2 37.♗f2 ♖ba8 38.h3 ♕d2 39.♖f1 ♗g7** 39...♗h6!. **40.♕e7! ♕f4 41.♗g3! ♕f5 42.♖xc6 ♖c2 43.♕h4** Black has a strong attack after 43.♕b7 ♖aa2 44.♗f2 ♕f4, for example 45.♖a6 (45.♕xb5? ♕e3!−+) 45...♖ab2 46.♖a8+ ♔h7 47.♕e4 ♗h6!−+. **43...b4! 44.d5? exd5 45.♕xb4 ♖aa2 46.♗f2 ♗xe5 47.♕h4 ♕f4 48.♖c8+ ♔h7**

And White resigned, as after 49.♕xf4 ♗xf4 Black still has a winning attack: 50...♗e3 and 50...♖xf2 are threats and 50.♖e8 is met by 50...♗c7 planning 51...♗b6.

□ **Krishnan Sasikiran**
■ **Christian Bauer**
La Roche-sur-Yon 2006

1.d4 a6

Note the odd move order in this game. If a 2600-GM can play 1...a6 and get away with it against a colleague like Sasikiran (2670 when this game was played) then surely we lesser mortals are allowed to play ...a6 on the third move!

2.e4 e6 3.♘f3

Or 3.c4 c5.

3...d5

3...c5 was also an option.

4.♘c3 ♘f6

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 a6 4.♘f3 ♘f6 is how we would have reached the diagram position. Black's idea is that 5.e5 is answered by 5...♘fd7 (but not 5...♘e4 6.♘xe4 dxe4 7.♘g5 and White is better), when the knight on f3 is slightly misplaced, as White no longer has f4. After 6.♗d3 c5 7.dxc5 (7.♘g5? ♗e7 8.♕h5 g6 9.♕g4 cxd4 10.♘xe6 ♘c5! 11.♘xd8 ♗xg4 netted Black a piece in Smirin-Legky, Metz 1991) 7...♘c6 8.♗f4 ♘xc5 9.0-0 ♗e7 10.♖e1 0-0 we reach a normal French Defence type of position. Black was doing fine after both:

– 11.♗g3 f5 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.♗xe5 ♕b6 Armanda-Kovacevic, Solin 2003, and

– 11.♕d2 f5 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.♘e5 ♘xe5 14.♗xe5 ♗xe5 15.♖xe5 ♕f6 Sale-Z.Lehmann, Budapest 1992.

5.♗d3

White retains the tension in the centre which he can also do with **5.♗g5**. However, after 5...♗e7 he must still make up his mind:

– 6.♗d3 can be met by 6...♘xe4 as 7.♗xe7?! (7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.♗xe4 and Black has nearly equalized) 7...♘xc3 8.♗xd8 ♘xd1 9.♖xd1?! (9.♗xc7 ♘xb2 10.♗e2 b5) 9...♔xd8 10.♘g5 ♔e7 11.♘xh7 ♘c6 12.c3 f6 wins for Black, Neiman-Prié, Paris 1990.

– 6.e5 ♘fd7 7.♕d2 c5 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.dxc5 ♘c6 10.♕f4 ♕xc5 11.♗d3 ♕b4 12.♕xb4 ♘xb4 13.0-0 ♘c6 was a pleasant ending for Black in Moal-Prié, Cannes 1990.

– Just bad is 6.♕d2? ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 dxe4 8.♗xe7 ♕xe7 9.♘g5 f5 10.♗e2 0-0 11.f3? e3! 0-1, Bhuiyan-Legky, Sautron 2001.

– While after 6.exd5 Black's best is 6...exd5 which is fully equal and therefore better than 6...♘xd5 7.♗xe7 ♕xe7 8.♕d2 ♕b4 9.♘xd5 ♕xd2+ 10.♔xd2 exd5 11.♖e1+ when White has a slight edge, Koch-Prié, Marseille 1990.

5.exd5 exd5 is just an Exchange Variation where White has nothing. The inclusion of 3.♘c3 a6 does not harm Black.

5...c5

Black strikes in the centre. The ...c5 advance is one of the main ideas behind 3...a6.

6.exd5

The only critical reply. 6.0-0 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘c6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.exd5 exd5 10.h3 0-0 was about equal in Van Elst-Legky, France 2002.

6...exd5

More or less forced: 6...cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘xd5 8.♘xd5 ♕xd5 9.0-0 ♗e7 was better for White in Pikula-Stojanovic, Herceg Novi tt 2001. However after 6...cxd4 White has the even stronger 7.dxe6! dxc3 (7...♗xe6 8.♘xd4) 8.exf7+ ♔xf7 9.♗g6+ ♔e7 10.♕e2+ ♔d7 (10...♗e6 11.♗f5 ♕d5 12.♘d4) 11.♗f4 which gives White a winning attack.

Nothing to write home about is 6...♘xd5 7.♘xd5 ♕xd5 8.c4.

7.0-0

White should seriously consider 7.♗g5 c4 (to avoid White's next it appears logical to play 7...♗e6. However, White is much better after both 8.♕e2 and 8.0-0 c4?! 9.♗xc4! dxc4 10.d5) 8.♗xf6! gxf6 9.♗e2

when Black has a pair of bishops, but White has a superior pawn structure. For example: – 9...♗h6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♘h4 ♗g5 12.♗g4!? ♗xh4 13.♗xc8 ♕xc8 14.♕h5 (retrieving the piece as 14...♗g5 15.f4 wins for White) 14...♘c6 15.♕xh4 ♕f5 16.♖ae1 ♔h8 17.♘d1 (17.♘xd5!? ♕xd5 18.♕xf6+ ♔g8 19.♖e3 ♖fe8 20.♖g3+ ♔f8 21.c3) 17...♕g5 18.♕xg5 fxg5 19.c3±, Bruzon Bautista-Borges Mateos, Santa Clara 2004. – 9...♗e6 10.0-0 b5?! 11.♖e1 ♗g7 12.♘h4 0-0 13.♗g4 ♕d7 14.♗f3 ♘c6 15.g3 f5 16.♘e2 f4! 17.c3 fxg3 18.hxg3 ♗h6 19.♘g2 ♘e7 20.♘cf4 and White had retained his positional edge. Pavlovic-Stojanovic, Herceg Novi tt 2001.

7...c4

The next sequence of moves is more or less forced.

8.♖e1+ ♗e7 9.♗f1 0-0 10.♗g5 ♘c6 11.♘e5

White has a stronghold on e5, while Black enjoys some space advantage on the queenside. The pawn strucuture is symmetrical. Play is about equal.

11...♗e6 12.♘xc6

12.h3 ♖c8 13.♖b1 ♖e8 14.a3 ♕b6 15.♗e3 was equal in Lamoureux-Prié, Val Maubuée 1990.

12...bxc6 13.♘a4 ♕a5

Black has an easy game. Clearly, Sasikiran has been unable to put 3...a6 (or in fact 1...a6!) to a serious test.

14.b3 ♖fe8 15.♕d2!? ♕xd2 16.♗xd2 ♘e4 17.♗a5 ♗f6 18.♖ad1 ♘d6 19.c3 ♗g5 20.♘b6 ♖ab8 21.bxc4 ♘xc4 22.♘xc4 dxc4

Play is still equal. The doubled c-pawns are no disadvantage here. Black's bishop has an excellent square on d5.

23.♗c7 ♖bc8 24.♗d6 ♗d5 25.f4 ♖ed8!? 26.fxg5 ♖xd6 27.♖b1 ♖e6 28.♔f2 ♔f8 29.♖xe6 ♗xe6 30.♖b6 c5! 31.d5 31.dxc5 ♖xc5 32.♖xa6 ♖f5+ 33.♔e1 ♖xg5 is equal, as is 31.♔e3 cxd4+ 32.♔xd4 ♖d8+ 33.♔e3 ♖d1. **31...♗xd5 32.♖xa6 ♖b8** Black has sufficient counterplay in exchange for the passed a-pawn. **33.♖a5 ♖b2+ 34.♔e3 ♖c2 35.♖xc5 ♗e6 36.a4 ♖xc3+ 37.♔d4 ♖a3 38.a5 ♔e7 39.♗xc4 ♖a4! 40.a6 ♗xc4** ½-½

CHAPTER 9

Adrian Mikhalchishin

Caro-Kann: Dementiev Variation

'Grandma's' 5.♘e2

I would like to say a couple of words about a forgotten yet great Soviet chess trainer: master Oleg Dementiev from Kaliningrad. He worked with the team of Armenia, especially with Vaganian and Petrosian and he 'brought up' Vladimir Akopian. Dementiev was a very strong master, participating in the finals of Russian and USSR championships, a musician by profession, who played the piano wonderfully.

Dementiev could work on chess for days, consuming unbelievable quantities of strong tea and smoking countless cigarettes. He had a curious nickname among his chess friends – 'babushka' ('grandma'). Dementiev had a beautiful positional style and he played many attacking games, but in the training field his main activity was the introduction of new ideas.

It was Dementiev who caused the renaissance of the Fischer variation against the Najdorf: 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗c4 e6 7.♗b3 b5 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♕f3. Here he had several brilliant ideas. In the Petrosian System 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.♘c3 ♗b7 5.a3 d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 he introduced the solid 7.♗d2!, causing significant difficulties for Black.

Here I would like to tell about another invention of Dementiev, which was played not so much by his pupils, but by the friends of his pupils – Oleg Romanishin and yours truly.

□ **Oleg Dementiev**
■ **Ratmir Kholmov**
Riga ch-URS 1970

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘e2 ♘gf6 6.♘2g3 e6 7.♗c4 ♗e7 8.0-0 ♘xe4 9.♘xe4 ♘f6 10.♘xf6+ ♗xf6

All the knights are exchanged (as in the game Mikhalchishin-Short, Lviv 1984, see below). White nevertheless keeps a space advantage.

11.c3 0-0 12.♗f4 b6 13.♗d3 ♗b7

14.♕f3!

An excellent prophylactic move. In this classical position (according to Nimzowitsch, this type of centre with black pawns on c6 and e6 versus a white pawn on d4 is known as 'saw' – German: Sägestellung) Black is aiming to advance either ...c5 or ...e5, whereas White's strategy rests on the idea to prevent these advances. That is exactly what White is doing with the text and his next couple of moves.

14...♕d7 15.♗e4 ♖ac8 16.♖ad1 ♖fd8 17.♖fe1 ♕e7 18.h3 g6 19.g3!

White starts a very complex restructuring – the bishop retreats to g2, while the queen transfer along the route f3-e3-e4-c2-a4 is being planned, in order to attack Black's weak points on the queenside.

19...♗g7 20.♕e3 ♖e8 21.♗g2 ♖cd8

In case of 21...c5?, then after 22.d5 e5 23.d6 ♕d7 24.♗xb7 Black might as well resign. Weird, but this move was suggested in *Chess Informant* by Mikhail Tal himself.

22.♕e4 ♗a8 23.♕c2 c5?

It would be better to remain passive and play 23...a5 24.♕a4 ♕d7.

Now White invade will invade the seventh rank with a decisive advantage.

24.♗xa8 ♖xa8 25.dxc5 ♕xc5 26.♖d7 e5 27.♕b3 ♕f8 28.♗e3 ♖e7 29.♖ed1 ♖xd7 30.♖xd7 ♗f6 31.♕b5 ♕e8 32.♕c6 ♔g7

In case of 32...♖c8, 33.♕xf6! ♕xd7 34.♗h6 would be winning.

33.♕b7 h5 34.b3

It was possible to take on f7 outright, but White prefers to improve his structure.

34...e4 35.♖xf7+ ♕xf7 36.♕xa8 ♗xc3 37.♕xe4 ♕d7 38.♔g2 b5 39.♕a8 ♗d4 40.♗f4 ♗b6 41.♕e4

White is a sound pawn up. The conversion of this edge is simple as Black's king is not safe. White won after:

41...♔f7 42.♕f3 ♔g8 43.♗e5 ♗d8 44.♗b2 b4 45.♕e4 ♔f7 46.♕c4+ ♕e6 47.♕xb4 ♕d5+ 48.♔g1 ♕d1+ 49.♔h2 ♗b6 50.♕f4+ ♔e8 51.♕e4+ ♔f7 52.♕b7+ ♔e6 53.♕c6+ ♔e7 54.♕xg6 ♕d2 55.♕f6+ ♔d7 56.♔g2 ♕d5+ 57.♕f3 ♕d2 58.♕f5+ ♔c6 59.♕c8+ ♔d6 60.♗a3+ ♔e5 61.♕e8+ ♔f6 62.♗b2+ 1-0

□ **Oleg Romanishin**
■ **Tigran Petrosian**
Moscow tt 1979

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘e2 ♘gf6 6.♘2g3 g6 7.♗c4

Also not bad was 7.♗g5, 8.♕d2 and 9.0-0-0, developing an initiative on the kingside.

7...♗g7 8.c3 0-0 9.0-0

9...♘d5?

It is rather strange to see the Tiger declining to exchange pieces. Better was 9...♘b6.

10.♖e1 e5 11.♗g5 f6?

Well, the Tiger loathes to give up pawns. The correct move was 11...♕b6! 12.dxe5 ♘xe5 13.♗xd5 cxd5 14.♕xd5 ♗e6 with serious compensation.

12.♗d2 exd4 13.cxd4 ♘b6 14.♗b3 ♔h8 15.♕c1 a5 16.a3 ♘c7?!

Here 16...f5 was worth considering.

17.♘c5! ♘bd5 18.♗h6 b6 19.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 20.♘d3 ♗d7 21.♘f4 ♖f7

Another option was the bishop transfer to f7 via e8.

22.h4! ♖c8 23.♕d2 ♕f8 24.♖ac1 ♖e7 25.♘xd5 ♘xd5 26.♗xd5 cxd5 27.♕f4!

Given the symmetrical pawn structure, White's advantage is determined by the activity of the pieces.

27...♖xe1+ 28.♖xe1 ♖c6 29.h5 ♕d6 30.♕e3 ♖c7 31.♕e7+!

This leads to an unpleasant pin.

31...♕xe7 32.♖xe7+ ♔h6 33.♔h2 a4 34.f4!

White has a winning advantage.

34...b5 35.♖f7 f5 36.♖e7 ♖b7 37.hxg6 ♔xg6 38.♘e2 ♗c8 39.♖e8 ♖c7 40.♘c3 ♗a6?

Just as hopeless would be 40...♔f7 41.♘xb5 ♖c6 42.♖xc8!

41.♖e6+

And Black resigned.

Five years later the idea of 'Dema', as Dementiev was also referred to, was successfully employed by the author of this article.

□ **Adrian Mikhalchishin**
■ **Nigel Short**
Lviv 1984

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7 5.♘e2 ♘gf6

Play was about equal in Panchenko-Speelman, Sochi 1982, after 5...♘df6 6.♘2g3 ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 ♗f5 8.♘g3 ♗g6 9.h4 h6 10.♗e3 e6 11.h5 ♗h7 12.♗d3 ♗xd3 13.♕xd3 ♘f6 14.0-0-0.

6.♘2g3 ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 ♘f6!? 8.♘xf6+

8...gxf6

A very aggressive continuation – more sober was 8...exf6.

9.c3 ♗f5 10.♗c4 e6 11.♗f4 ♗d6 12.♕f3 ♗xf4 13.♕xf4 ♖g8 14.g3 ♕b6 15.0-0-0 0-0-0 16.h3 ♕c7 17.♕e3?!

Stronger was 17.♕f3 ♕e7 18.g4 with an advantage.

17...h5 18.b3! ♕d6 19.♔b2

With the idea of ♗e2, followed by c3-c4, a2-a3, b3-b4 to gain the edge.

19...♖g5!? 20.♗e2 ♗g6 21.a4 ♖a5 22.♗f3 b5 23.♖a1 bxa4 24.b4 ♖b5 25.♖xa4 a5 26.♖ha1 axb4 27.c4 ♖b8?

Clearly better would have been 27...♖b7.

28.♖d1! e5

29.♖a6 e4 30.♗xe4 ♗xe4 31.♕xe4 ♔b7 32.c5! ♕e6 33.♖b6+ ♔c7 34.♕f4+ ♔d7 35.♖xb8 ♕e2+ 36.♔c1 ♖xb8 37.♕xb8 ♕c4+ 38.♔d2 ♕c3+ 39.♔e2 ♕c2+ 40.♔e1! ♕e4+ 41.♔f1 ♕h1+ 42.♔e2 ♕e4+ 43.♔d2 ♕f3 44.♕xb4 1-0

CHAPTER 10

Dimitri Reinderman

The Porcupine Variation

1.c4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4

The English Opening is often played by people who want to get a quiet position from the opening. In most countries that is, but not in Spain: if you answer 1.c4 with 1...f5 against someone with a double surname, you might be surprised by an obscure gambit called the Porcupine Variation: 2.c4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4!?. No quiet positions for them!

The variation looks a bit like the Staunton Gambit, 1.d4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3. In this variation Black can get a good position by defending e4 with ...♘f6, ...d5 and possibly ...♗f5. In the Porcupine Variation White can take the pawn on d5 with his c-pawn and chase the other defender of e4 with his g-pawn. After the e-pawn is taken, White has possibilities of an attack on the light squares. White can also make it a real gambit by playing d3: if Black takes, he will get trouble on the diagonal b1-h7 after ♗xd3. Not all is well for White though, since g4 is a weakening move. After for example 4...g6 5.g5 ♘h5 the square f4 looks attractive for the black knight. Moving your pawn to g4 also makes kingside castling unattractive, and neither is it easy to find a safe place for the king on the queenside. With the Porcupine you can stab your opponent quickly, but the quills can also hurt you. However, so far the practical results, 60% in 31 games, speak for White.

Though Black has a lot of legal moves after 4.g4, only three react in some way to the threat of 5.g5, and in almost all games so far Black played either 4...g6, 4...h6 or 4...d5.

□ **Juan Mellado Trivino**
■ **Unai Garbisu de Goni**
Zamora ch-ESP 1996

1.c4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4 g6

The most logical move, since it reacts to the white threat and also because Leningrad players want to play ...g6 anyway.

5.g5

I think this is the best move. Two rounds after this game Mellado Trivino deviated against Garbiso de Goni with 5.h4. Then 5...d5 6.g5 ♘h5 7.cxd5 ♗g7 8.♕a4+ c6 9.♗g2 0-0 10.♗xe4 cxd5 11.♗xd5+ ♔h8 was not bad for Black, but 6...d4 7.gxf6 dxc3 is even better (Sokolsky-Antoshin, Soviet Union 1960).

In a rapid game against a 2100 player I tried 5.d3, and after 5...d5 6.g5 d4 7.♘ce2 ♘g4 8.dxe4 ♘c6 9.h3 ♘ge5 10.♘g3 ♗g7 11.f4, everything looks alt right. That is, until, like my opponent, you spot 11...0-0 with definitive problems which I didn't manage to solve.

5...♘h5 6.♘ge2

6.♗g2 ♗g7 7.♗xe4 e5 8.d3 ♘c6 9.♘ge2 d6 was fine for Black in Asienso Lisan-Mellado Trivino(!), Barcelona rapid 1996.

Alternatives like 6.d3 ♗g7 7.dxe4 0-0 and 6.♘xe4 d5!? (6...♗g7 7.d4 d5 8.♘g3 ♘xg3 9.hxg3 ♘c6 10.♗e3, Sokolsky-Vasiukov, Odessa 1960) 7.♘g3 (7.cxd5 ♕xd5 8.♗g2 ♕d3 9.♘c5 ♕d4 10.♘xb7? ♘f4−+) 7...♘xg3 8.hxg3 ♗g7 9.♗g2 dxc4 10.♕c2?! (10.♕a4+ is equal) 10...♕d3! 11.♕xd3 cxd3 12.♗e4 0-0∓, Andres Gonzalez-Cenal Gutierrez, Spain 1999, won't bother Black.

6...e6

Giving back the pawn is also possible – after 6...♗g7 7.♘xe4 0-0 8.d4 ♘c6 9.♗g2 d6 10.0-0 ♗g4 11.f3 ♗f5 12.♗e3 chances are about equal.

7.d3 exd3

After 7...♗g7 a possible variation is 8.dxe4 0-0 9.♗e3 ♘c6 10.f4 e5 11.f5 gxf5 12.exf5 ♖xf5 13.♕d5+ ♖f7 14.0-0-0, when White has enough compensation for the pawn.

8.♘g3 ♘xg3 9.hxg3 ♘c6 10.♗xd3

10...♘e5

10...♗g7 11.♖xh7 ♗xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♖xh7 13.♗xg6+ ♖f7 14.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 15.♕h5+ ♔g7 16.♕h6+ ♔g8 17.♕g6+ would give a draw, but not more. Of course White can just continue his development – instead of taking on h7 – he has enough compensation for the pawn.

11.♗f4 ♗g7

11...♘xd3+ 12.♕xd3 ♗g7 13.0-0-0 0-0 14.♖h4 would give White dangerous threats on the h-file.

12.♗c2 d6

Dubious is 12...♘xc4?! 13.♖xh7 ♖xh7 14.♗xg6+ ♔e7 15.♗xh7 ♘xb2 16.♕c2 ♘c4 17.g6 (threatening 18.♗g5+ ♗f6 19.g7) 17...♕h8 18.♘b5! d5 (18...♗xa1 19.♕xc4+−) 19.♖c1 ♗e5 20.♘xc7 ♗xc7 21.♗xc7 when White has a clear advantage.

13.♕e2 ♕e7 14.c5!? ♗d7 15.0-0-0 ♗c6 16.♘e4 ♗xe4

Castling is an option:

– 16...0-0-0 17.cxd6 cxd6 18.♘xd6+ ♖xd6 19.♗xe5 ♖xd1+ 20.♖xd1 ♕xg5+ 21.f4 ♕e7 would be a tiny bit better for White.

– 16...0-0 is not so clear, but surely White has enough compensation for the pawn then.

17.♗xe4 d5

Returning the pawn, since after 17...0-0-0 18.♗g2 ♔b8 19.♔b1 White's bishops and rooks execute strong pressure on the black position.

18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.♗xg6+ hxg6 20.♕xe5

White has some initiative here, but with some careful moves Black should be able to draw.

20...♖f8?! 20...♖xh1 21.♖xh1 0-0-0 is easier to defend for Black. **21.♖he1 ♕xc5+** 21...0-0-0 22.♕xe6+ ♕xe6 23.♖xe6 ♖xf2 24.♖xg6 ♖g2 25.♖d3 would not be so easy for Black to draw. **22.♔b1 0-0-0 23.♕xe6+ ♔b8 24.f4 ♕f2 25.♕e3 ♕g2 26.♖d3 ♖h8 27.♕e2 ♕h3?!** After 27...♕xe2 28.♖xe2 c6 29.♖e6 ♖dg8 30.♔c2 ♖h2+ White is just a bit better. **28.♕e6 ♕g2?** 28...♕xe6 29.♖xe6 ♖hg8 30.♔c2 is worse for Black than the variation above, but still drawable. Now Black just loses a pawn. **29.♕xg6 ♖h2 30.♖b3?!** 30.♕f6 keeps the extra pawn. **30...a5?** 30...♖h1! 31.♖e3 (31.♕e6 d4⇄) 31...♖xe1+ 32.♖xe1 ♕xg3 33.♕e8 ♔c8 34.♕e6+ ♔b8 35.♕e3 ♕g4 gives decent drawing chances. **31.♕c6! ♕xb2+** Or 31...b6 32.♖xb6+ cxb6 33.♕xb6+ ♔c8 34.♖c1+ winning. **32.♖xb2 ♖xb2+ 33.♔xb2 bxc6 34.g6** The pawns cannot be stopped. **1-0**

□ **Juan Manuel Bellon Lopez**
■ **Martyn Goodger**
Gibraltar 2006

1.c4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e4 fxe4

2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 and 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e4 have so far always led to the same position, but Black might try 3...♘xe4. Play can continue 4.♘xe4 fxe4 5.♕h5+ g6 6.♕e5 ♖g8 7.♕xe4 ♘c6 8.♘f3 with mutual chances.

4.g4 h6

After 1.d4 f5 2.e4 fxe4 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.g4, the best move is 4...h6. That is perhaps the reason why people have played it in this position too, but here it offers White chances for an advantage.

5.♗g2

I prefer this to 5.d3 d5 6.cxd5 (6.dxe4 has been played three times, but after 6...d4 Black is better) 6...♘xd5 (6...♗xg4 7.♕a4+ ♘bd7 8.dxe4 is a little better for White) 7.♕a4+ ♘c6 8.♕xe4, when Black will regret having played h6, though after 8...e6 9.♕g6+ ♔d7 followed by 10...♕f6 things are not so clear.

But Black can play more convincingly, as Johan van Mil already showed against Hvenekilde (Copenhagen 1984): 5...e5! 6.g5 hxg5 7.♗xg5 d6 8.♗g2 ♗e7 9.♘ge2 ♘c6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♗xe4 ♗e6 12.♕a4 ♕d7 and Black had a small advantage.

5...d5

Things can quickly go wrong for Black if he is not careful:

– 5...e5 6.h4 ♗e7? 7.g5 hxg5 8.hxg5 ♖xh1 9.♗xh1 ♘g8 10.♕h5+ ♔f8 11.♗xe4 c6? 12.♕f3+ 1-0, Mellado Trivino-Vallejo Pons, Oropesa del Mar 1996. The current super GM was only 16 then, but already rated 2420.

– 5...e6?! 6.h4 c5?! 7.g5 hxg5?! 8.hxg5 ♖xh1 9.♗xh1 was also already losing for Black in Persson-Orel, Eger 1995.

6.cxd5 ♗xg4 7.♕b3 ♕c8

7...♘bd7 8.♘xe4 g6 9.d3 ♗g7 10.h3 ♗f5 11.♘e2 was a little better for White in Narciso Dublan-Luque Canalejo, Cordoba 1995.

8.♘xe4 ♘bd7

9.d3

I like 9.♘e2 ♘b6 10.♘f4 for White.

9...♘b6 10.h3 ♗h5 11.♗e3 ♗f7

Stronger was the simple 11...♘fxd5.

12.♘c3 c6 13.♗xb6

13.dxc6!? ♗xb3 14.cxb7 ♕e6 15.bxa8♕+ ♘xa8 16.axb3 gives White a rook, bishop, pawn and initiative for the queen, which is enough, but with five weak pawns it won't be better for White.

13...axb6 14.♘ge2 ♘xd5 15.♘xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗xd5 cxd5 17.♕xd5 ♖a5 18.♕e4 ♕c6 19.a3

19...e5?

This doesn't help Black in the bishop versus knight fight. The black bishop wants to be on the long diagonal, so 19...g5 should have been played.

20.♖c1 ♕xe4 After 20...♖c5 21.♖xc5 ♕xc5 22.d4 Black loses a pawn. **21.dxe4 ♖c5 22.♘c3 ♗e7 23.♔e2 0-0 24.♘a4 ♖xc1** 24...♖c6 25.♖xc6 bxc6 26.♖c1 b5 27.♘b6 ♖f4 28.f3 ♖h4 29.♔f2 is also better for White. **25.♖xc1 b5 26.♘b6 ♖f4?** 26...b4 27.a4 ♗d6 keeps material equality. **27.♘d5! ♖f7 28.♖c8+ ♗f8 29.♖e8** Winning either pawn e5 or (via e6-b6) pawn b5. **29...♔h7 30.♖xe5 ♗d6 31.♖e6 ♗c5 32.f4 ♗d4 33.b4 ♗b2 34.f5** 34.♔d3 ♗xa3 35.♔c2 would lock up the bishop. **34...♗xa3 35.h4 h5 36.♔d3 ♗b2 37.♘f4 ♖d7+ 38.♔c2 ♗f6 39.♘g6 ♖c7+** Losing without a chance, but 39...♖d4 40.♖e8 ♖d8 41.♖xd8 ♗xd8

42.e5 ♔g8 43.♔d3 ♔f7 44.♔e4 ♗b6 45.♔d5 is also winning for White.
40.♔d3 ♖c3+ 41.♔e2 ♖c2+ 42.♔d1 ♖c8 43.e5 ♗xh4 44.♘xh4 ♖c4 45.♘g6 h4 46.♖e8 ♔h6 47.e6 ♔g5 48.e7 ♖d4+ 49.♔c2 1-0

□ **Guillermo Baches Garcia**
■ **Joan Canal Oliveras**
Manresa 1997

1.c4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e4 fxe4 4.g4 d5
A good move, but normally it should take an unprepared opponent a lot of time to play it. To evaluate this move well, Black should calculate at least until move 14 and see that giving up castling is not a big problem.
5.g5

5...d4
Black tried 5...♘g4 6.cxd5 a few times, and now:
– 6...e5?! 7.♘xe4 (safe and good. 7.h3 ♘xf2 8.♔xf2 ♗c5+ 9.♔e2 ♕xg5 10.d4 exd3+ 11.♕xd3 ♕h5+ 12.♕f3 ♕g6 as in Brkic-Cerubdzic, Novi Becej 2007, is probably better for White too, but clearly less safe) 7...♗c5 (7...♕xd5 8.♗g2 wins a queen or the knight on g4) 8.♘xc5 ♕xd5 9.f3 ♕xc5 10.fxg4 0-0 11.d4 exd4 12.♗d3? ♕c6 led to a black win in Persson-Müller, Eger 1993, but after 8.♕a4+ ♗d7 9.♕b3 ♗d4 10.f3 White wins a piece under rather safe circumstances.
– Better is 6...c6 7.f3 exf3 8.♘xf3 cxd5!? (8...♕d6) 9.h3 ♕d6 10.♗b5+ ♘c6 11.hxg4 ♕g3+ 12.♔e2 ♗xg4 13.♕f1, when Black has two pawns for the piece and possibly a third one is on the way, while the white king is standing badly. Still, my computer prefers White and I haven't been able to prove him wrong.
6.gxf6 dxc3 7.fxg7 cxd2+
7...♗xg7 8.♕h5+ ♔f8 9.dxc3 ♘d7 10.♕d5 c6 11.♕xe4 gives White an extra pawn and a better position.
8.♗xd2 ♗xg7 9.♕h5+

9...♔f8
Development is equal, but the black king is standing badly and the extra pawn Black has is weak. So at first sight it looks like White should have plenty of compensation here. However, White can't easily develop the kingside and that makes it difficult to attack the black king.
10.♗h6
Here 10.0-0-0 ♕e8 11.♕h4 ♕g6 12.♘e2 ♘c6 13.♖g1 ♕f6 leads to an equal position.
10...♕d6 11.♖d1 ♕g6
Of course not 11...♕xh6?? 12.♖d8 mate.
12.♗xg7+ ♔xg7 13.♕e5+ ♕f6 14.♕xe4 ♖f8
White regained his pawn, but both kings are not safe now, while development is still equal.

15.♘f3!

In such a position developing is better than a passive move like 15.♖d2. The knight is untouchable due to 16.♖g1+.

15...♘c6 16.♖g1+ ♔h8 17.♗d3 ♗f5

Ever since his ninth move, Black probably had in his mind that exchanging queens would be beneficial for him. However, now it changes the position in a positive way for White, who will have the better king position. Instead 17...♖f7 keeps the tension and is about equal.

18.♕xf5 ♕xf5 19.♗xf5 ♖xf5 20.♖g3 ♖af8 21.♔e2 e5?!

This allows White's next move, which otherwise would have failed to 22...♖xf3 23.♖xf3 ♖xf3 24.♔xf3 ♘e5+.

22.♖d7 ♖5f7 23.♖xf7 ♖xf7

Trading the rooks benefits White, since the pressure on the f-file is gone. Also, the fewer the pieces, the more important his king activity will be. Still it's not easy to make progress.

24.♔e3 h6 25.♖g4

Or 25.a3 a5 26.b3 ♔h7 27.♔c4.

25...♔h7 26.♘e1

With the idea ♘d3 and ♔e4, since 26.♔e4 ♘b4, threatening 27...♘xa2 and 27...♘d3, is annoying. Another idea was 26.♖e4 ♖e7 27.♖h4 ♔g7 28.♖g4+ ♔f6 29.♔e4, with some advantage.

26...h5 27.♖g5 ♔h6 28.♖g8 ♘d4

29.♘d3?

29.♖e8! ♘f5+ 30.♔e2 keeps the better chances: for example 30...♖e7 (30...♘d4+ 31.♔f1 ♘c6 32.♘d3 ♖f5 33.b3 ♔g6 34.♘c5 b6 35.♘a6 ♖f7 36.♖e6+ wins a pawn) 31.♖xe7 ♘xe7 32.♘d3 ♘g6 33.♔e3 ♔g5 34.♔e4 ♔f6 35.b4 b6 36.b5 ♔e6 37.f4 exf4 38.♘xf4+ ♘xf4 39.♔xf4 would win for White.

29...♘f5+ 30.♔e4 ♘d6+ 31.♔xe5 ♘xc4+ 32.♔d4 ♘d2 33.f4 ♖d7+

33...♘f3+ 34.♔e4 ♘xh2 35.♘c5 gives White enough play to draw, but not more.

34.♔c3 ♘e4+ 35.♔c2 ♖f7 36.b4 ♘f6 37.♖d8 ♖d7 38.♖a8 a6 39.♖b8 b6 40.♖a8 ♖d4 41.a3 ♘d5 42.♖h8+ ♔g7 43.♖xh5??

A horrific blunder. 43.♖c8 or 43.♖a8 would lead to a draw.

43...♖xd3 44.♖g5+ ♔f6 0-1

Conclusion: theoretically Black is fine in the Porcupine Variation, and I don't expect to see it often in grandmaster practice. However, it leads to interesting, unbalanced positions and is setting problems for the opponent right from the start. I would recommend the variation for club level play: you'll have a good chance to either get a time advantage first and a board advantage later, or to get a quick win.

CHAPTER 11

Jeroen Bosch

Gajewski's Incredible Spanish Novelty

Marshall Attack in the Chigorin?

Two SOS volumes ago Adrian Mikhalchishin wrote an article on Grzegorz Gajewski's 9...♖b8 in the classical Spanish.

Normally SOS lines leave the well-trodden paths as soon as possible, but it was easy to make an exception for Gajewski's 9...♖b8: a new idea in one of the most important tabiyas of modern chess. Remarkably enough Gajewski has meanwhile introduced another novel concept in the closed Ruy Lopez. In the Chigorin Variation after 9...♘a5 10.♗c2 the whole world plays 10...c5 but not Gajewski. His stunning 10...d5!? is reminiscent of the Marshall Attack and the resulting positions are extremely sharp – an ideal weapon to play for a win with black. So far the results have been uplifting to say the least, and, for the moment, the ball is firmly in White's court. It is hard to imagine that Gajewski's concept is the refutation of the Ruy Lopez, but when this book was going to the press, it was clear that Magnus Carlsen had prepared this very line for the World Cup!

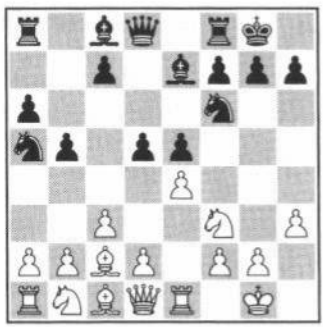
□ **Viktor Kuznetsov**
■ **Grzegorz Gajewski**
Pardubice 2007

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘a5

Gajewski's previous find was 9...♖b8, with the point that after 10.d4 exd4 11.cxd4 Black has 11...d5 (with the rook on a8 White would be able to play 12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 ♘xe4 14.♗xd5 with a double attack – this is the tactical point of 9...♖b8) 12.e5 ♘e4 with a decent position – see SOS-6 and the SOS Files of SOS-7.

10.♗c2 d5!?

For over a century the logical follow-up of 9...♘a5 has been 10...c5, to gain influence in the centre and to slowly equalize later on. Clearly, Gajewski is not interested in equalizing and boldly advances his d-pawn, sacrificing material for considerable attacking chances, as we will see.



11.exd5

A cop-out was 11.d3 dxe4 12.dxe4 ♕xd1 13.♖xd1 ♗b7 ½-½ Klundt-Bromberger, Nuremberg 2007. While 11.♘xe5 dxe4 12.d4 (12.♗xe4 ♘xe4 13.♖xe4 ♗b7 14.♖e1 ♕d5 and Black has more than enough for the pawn as any Marshall-gambiteer will acknowledge) 12...exd3 is also equal.

A serious alternative is 11.d4. However, after 11...♘xe4 12.♘xe5 f6 13.♘f3 ♘c4 14.♘bd2 (taking the pawn still gives a lot of compensation) 14...♘cxd2 15.♗xd2 ♗b7 16.♗f4 ♗d6 chances were even in Smirin-Greenfeld, Beer Sheva rapid 2007. Black also has the more ambitious 11...dxe4 12.♘xe5 c5, as 13.♗xe4 ♘xe4 14.♖xe4 ♗b7 still gives more than enough play for the pawn.

Recent practice has seen 13.♗g5 ♗b7, and now:

– 14.♘d2 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖e8 (15...♕xd4 16.♘xe4 is inferior) 16.♗xf6 (16.♘b3 ♘xb3 17.♗xb3 ♘d5 18.♗xe7 ♖xe7 equal, Dominguez-Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007) 16...♗xf6 17.♘xe4 ♗xe5 18.dxe5 ♖xe5 when White should avoid 19.b4? ♘c6 20.♘c5 ♕xd1+ 21.♖axd1 ♖xe1+ 22.♖xe1 ♘xb4 and Black won after a long game in Charbonneau-Benjamin, Internet 2007.

– 14.dxc5?! ♕c7! 15.♗xf6 ♖ad8! (15...♗xf6 16.♘d7!) 16.♕e2?! (16.♘d7 ♖xd7 17.♗d4 was preferable) 16...♗xf6 17.♘g4? (17.c6!) 17...♗g5 18.♘e3 f5 19.b4 and now 19...f4! 20.♘f1 f3 20.gxf3 e3! ended in a crushing win, Volokitin-Wojtaszek, Heraklion Ech-tt 2007.

11...e4

The point of his previous move. White must either give up his 'Spanish' bishop or lose some time wandering around with his knight.

12.♘g5

The most obvious move in the position. White intends to take on e4 with the knight preserving his light-squared bishop. In the months following this game other knight moves have so far been unsuccessful:

● 12.♘d4 ♕xd5 13.f3. Apparently the point of White's previous move, but it looks unnatural and Black has several satisfactory answers. Votava goes for the sharpest approach: 13...♗xh3!? (worthy of investigation are 13...♗c5!? 14.fxe4 ♕e5 planning 15...♘c6, and 13...♗d6 14.fxe4 ♕e5) 14.fxe4?! (14.gxh3 c5 15.♘b3 ♕g5+ and Black has a least a draw) 14...♕g5 15.♕f3 ♗g4. Material is equal, but Black has a huge edge in development. The game continued: 16.d3 ♕h4 17.♕f2 ♘h5 18.♕xh4 ♗xh4 19.♖f1 ♘g3 20.♖f4 ♗g5 21.♖xg4 ♗xc1

22.♘b3? ♗xb2 23.♘xa5 ♘e2+ 24.♔f1 ♘c1! 25.♔e1 ♗xa1 26.♔d2 ♗b2 and Black won in Krejci-Votava, Ceska Trebova 2007.

● 12.♘e5 ♕xd5 13.d4 exd3 14.♕xd3 ♗b7 15.♕xd5 ♗xd5 16.♗g5 ♖fe8 was equal in Nemcova-Manik, Ceska Trebova 2007.

● Michael Adams played 12.♗xe4 against Carlsen in the fourth round of the World Cup. After 12...♘xe4 13.♖xe4 ♗b7! 14.d4 (14...♗xd5 15.♖e1 ♗d6) -14...♖e8 15.♗f4 ♘c4 16.♖e2 (16.b3 ♘b6 17.c4 bxc4 18.bxc4 ♘xc4 with equal chances in Kaplan-Ragger, Yerevan 2007) 16...♗xd5 17.♘e5

17...♗g5 18.♗g3 ♘xe5 19.♖xe5 ♖xe5 20.♗xe5 ♕d7 21.♘a3 f6 22.♗g3 and White was slightly better in Adams-Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk 2007. Carlsen held on to the draw and qualified for the next round.

12...♘xd5

13.♘xe4

Computers are good at finding tricks like 13.♘xh7!?. However, with most of White's army stuck in the barracks on the queenside this is unlikely to be more than a blank. 13...♔xh7 (13...♖e8 does not trap the knight after 14.♗xe4 f5 15.♗xd5+ ♕xd5 16.♘g5) 14.♗xe4+ ♔g8 15.♗xd5 ♕xd5 16.♖xe7 ♗xh3! (Black can also pick up an exchange for two pawns with 16...♗e6 17.d4 ♕d6 18.♖xe6 ♕xe6 when the game is about equal) 17.♕f3 (17.♕f1 ♗e6 clearly favours Black) 17...♕xf3 (17...♕g5!?) 18.gxf3 and now – despite his extra pawn – after either 18...♖ae8 or 18...c5 White must suffer in the ending.

After 13.♘xe4 it may appear at first sight that Black does not have enough for the pawn. True, he has an edge in development, but the knight on a5 does not look too good. Within a few moves (d4, ♘d2-f3) White will be solidly placed. However, Black's compensation is of a very dynamic and concrete nature. The next four moves his f-pawn is going to make a career for himself, tearing White's castled position apart in the progress. Gajewski must have found the whole concept in his study – a strong example of computer-assisted analysis making for attractive chess!

13...f5! 14.♘g3

No improvement was the intermediate 14.b4? fxe4 15.bxa5. After 15...♗c5 Black has a winning attack: 16.♖xe4 (16.♖f1 ♕h4 17.♕e1 – 17.d4 exd3 18.♕xd3 ♗b7 – 17...♗xh3 18.♗xe4 ♖ae8! 19.♗xd5+ ♔h8 also wins) 16...♗xf2+ 17.♔h1 ♗f5 18.♗a3 c5! 19.♖e5? ♗xc2 20.♕xc2 ♗g3 21.♖f5 ♕g5! 22.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 23.♕d1 ♕h5 0-1, Jameson-Rudd, Liverpool 2007.

14...f4

With tempo the pawn marches on.

15.♘e4

Of course 15.♘f1 is also met by 15...f3. Computers have no inhibitions, hence, they

do not ignore the odd-looking 15.♘h5. The point is that after 15...g6 16.b4 (16.♗e4 c6 transposes to 15...c6) 16...♘c4 17.a4 Black loses a few pawns and has to loosen his position to win the knight.

Therefore Tony Kosten has recommended 15...c6 for Black (on *chesspublishing.com*). The knight on h5 looks stupid, and if the regular Marshall is OK for Black (and there are still no signs to the contrary) then this must be fine for Black too.

15...f3

Now White cannot keep his castle intact so he might as well do something about his development.

16.d4 fxg2

17.♘g3

With games played and published almost instantly modern theory develops quickly. A few months after the stem game the game Weeks-Mannion, Port Erin 2007, continued 17.♕h5, which was no improvement over the stem game, though, for after 17...g6 18.♕h6 ♖f5! White must lose more time with 19.♘g3 ♗f8 20.♕d2 ♖f7 (20...♘c4) 21.♕d3? ♗xh3 and Black won.

Please note that once White has played 12.♘g5 and 13.♘xe4 the position after 16...fxg2 arises almost by force.

17...♕d6

Now that his f-pawn has come to a standstill it is actually not so easy to determine what the best move is for Black. With the text Black makes a generally useful move (the rooks will be connected once Black moves his bishop from c8 now, and ...♘f4 is prepared).

Also useful is the prophylactic 17...c6.

Worse looks 17...♘f6?! 18.♗g5, as Notkin has indicated in *Chess Today*. While 17...♗xh3?? 18.♕h5 blunders a piece of course.

Worthy of further investigation though is the sharp 17...c5!? 18.♗e4 (18.dxc5 ♗xc5 19.♘e4 ♗b6) 18...♖a7 (18...♗b7 19.♘f5) 19.dxc5 (19.♗xg2 ♖d7) 19...♖d7 20.b4 ♘f6 (20...♘xc3 21.♘xc3 ♖xd1 22.♖xd1 favours White) 21.♘d2 ♘xe4 22.♘gxe4 ♘c6 and White has a small material advantage, but his kingside is weakened and he duly misses his light-squared bishop. Black aims to continue with ...♖d3 and ...♘e5.

18.♗e4

In the game Wang Hao-Gawain Jones from the England-China match (Liverpool 2007) the stem game was followed until now, with the Chinese grandmaster echoing Black's last move with 18.♕d3!? g6 19.♘e4 (19.♔xg2 ♕c6!? 20.♘e4 ♗h4 21.♖e2 ♗f5 22.f3 ♕d7 retrieves the pawn with great play) 19...♕e6 20.♗h6 (safer is perhaps 20.♕g3 when her majesty can aid the king in his defence) 20...♘f4 (strong looks 20...♖f5 21.♘bd2 ♖h5 Rybka quickly indicates the following tactical line which leads to an approximately equal position: 22.♗g5 ♖xh3 23.♘g3 ♕d7 24.♗xe7 ♘xe7 25.♕f3 ♗b7 26.♗b3+ ♘d5 27.♖e7! ♕xe7 28.♗xd5+ ♔g7 29.♗xb7 ♖f8 30.♕xg2 ♖xg3! 31.♕xg3 – 31.fxg3 ♕e3+ 32.♔h1 ♖f2∓ – 31...♘xb7. The whole line was also given by Tony Kosten on chesspublishing.com. Finding all this at the board is obviously not so simple) 21.♗xf4 ♖xf4 22.♘bd2 ♕f7 23.a4?! ♗h4 24.axb5 ♗b7! 25.♖xa5 (25.♖e2 was the best chance, but who can blame White for taking the knight?)

25...♖xe4 (a pity, Jones would have been rewarded for his uncompromising play had he found 25...♗xe4! 26.♘xe4 – 26.♖xe4 ♖g4!! which wins on the spot but is easily missed by a human. The threat of 27...♕xf2+ and promoting the g-pawn cannot be parried satisfactorily – 26...♖xe4 27.♖e2 ♖xe2 28.♕xe2 ♖e8 29.♗b3 ♖xe2 30.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 31.bxa6 ♗xf2+ 32.♔xg2 ♗xd4+ 33.♔f3 ♖f2+ 34.♔e4 ♗a7 and this is a superior version of the ending that eventually arises in this game) 26.♘xe4 ♗xe4 27.♕e3 ♗xc2 28.bxa6 ♗e4 29.a7 ♖f8 30.f4 ♗d5? (30...♗a8) 31.♖e2 ♕f5? 32.♖a1? (32.a8♕ ♖xa8 33.♖xa8+ ♗xa8 34.♕e8+ ♔g7 35.♕xa8 ♕xh3 36.♕xg2 wins) 32...♗g5 33.♕e5 ♗xf4 34.♕xf5 gxf5 35.c4 ♗f3 36.♖xg2+ ♗xg2 37.♔xg2 ♖a8 38.♔f3 clearly White has a lot more for the piece now than in the note to 25...♖xe4. The game ended in a draw after 104 moves in a rook versus rook and bishop ending.

This high-level encounter demonstrates that Black has tremendous play in the position after 17...♕d6. It also demonstrates that the ensuing positions are very complex for mere mortals.

18...♗b7?!

It is logical to develop the bishop on the long diagonal, but this loses control over the f5-square. After White's next Black is forced to sacrifice material, for which he objectively does not obtain sufficient compensation. This sober remark, does feel inadequate though considering the beautiful win that follows.

19.♘f5 ♖xf5

The only continuation that is consistent with his previous move.

20.♗xf5 ♖f8

Now if the bishop moves from the f-file Black has attacking ideas like ...♗h4 and ...♖xf2 (followed by ...♕h2). Therefore 21.♕g4!? was a serious option, but so is Kuznetsov's intermediate

21.♖e6!

21...♖xf5!?

I don't know if Gajewski planned this spectacular move when he opted for 18...♗b7. It may also have been the result of the following process of elimination: 21...♕d8 more or less loses to 22.♕h5 ♘f6 23.♖xf6! ♖xf6 24.♕xh7+ ♔f7 25.♗g5, and 21...♕d7 is simply met by 22.♖f6! ♕e8 23.♖xf8+ ♗xf8 24.♗g4 and Black's attack is going nowhere.

22.♖xd6 ♗xd6 23.a4?

With all his pieces on the back rank, Kuznetsov aims to involve his rook in the fastest way by opening up the a-file. This weakens square b3 though. The sober 23.♕e2 looks best.

23...♗g3!?

Another great move!

24.f3

The best defence. If White takes the bishop then 24.fxg3 ♖f1+ 25.♕xf1 gxf1♕+ 26.♔xf1 ♘b3 demonstrates the downside of 23.a4, after 27.♖a3 ♘xc1 28.axb5 axb5 29.♖a7 ♗c8 Black's pieces are somewhat better than White's rook and pawn. Losing is 24.♔xg2? ♘xc3+.

24...♗f4!?

Insufficient in the end is 24...♘c4 25.♕e2 ♘de3 26.♗xe3 ♖xf3 27.♗c1 ♖f1+ 28.♕xf1 ♗h2+ 29.♔f2 ♗g3+ 30.♔e2 and White remains an exchange up.

25.axb5

Not a bad move. A draw is the most likely result in the tactics resulting from 25.♗xf4 ♘xf4 26.h4 (26.♘d2 ♖g5!) taking away the g5-square from Black's rook, viz. 26...♖f6!? (26...♘c4 27.♘d2 ♘h3+ 28.♔xg2 ♘e3+ 29.♔xh3 ♘xd1 30.♖xd1 is about equal too) 27.♘d2 ♖g6 28.♕c2 ♘h3+ 29.♔h2 g1♕+ 30.♖xg1 ♘xg1 31.d5! ♗xd5 32.♕f5 and either White or Black will hold a perpetual: 32...c6 33.♕c8+ ♔f7 34.♕c7+ ♔e6 35.♕xa5 (35.♕c8+) 35...♗xf3 36.♘xf3 (36.♕xa6 ♖g2+ 37.♔h1 ♗d5) 36...♘xf3+ 37.♔h3 ♘g1+.

25...♗xc1 26.♖xa5?

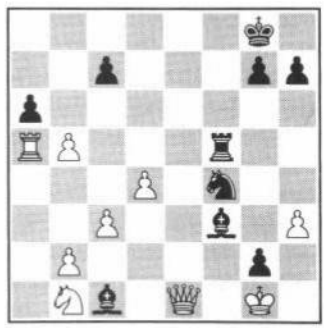
Taking the wrong piece. After 26.♕xc1!? ♖xf3 (26...♘b3? 27.♕c2 loses outright. More complex is 26...♘f4 27.♕xf4! ♖xf4 28.bxa6 ♗a8 29.♖xa5 ♖xf3 30.♔xg2 ♖xc3+ 31.♔f2 ♖c2+ 32.♔e3 ♖xb2 33.♘d2 which is still better for White) 27.bxa6 (perhaps 27.♕g5!? ♖f1+ 28.♔xg2 ♘e3+ 29.♔h2 ♖h1+ 30.♔g3 ♖g1+ 31.♔f4 ♘d5+ 32.♕xd5+! ♗xd5 33.♖xa5 ♖xb1 34.bxa6 with a slightly better version of the main line) 27...♗a8 28.♖xa5 ♘e3 29.♕xe3 ♖f1+ 30.♔h2 ♖h1+ 31.♔g3 g1♕+ 32.♕xg1 ♖xg1+ 33.♔f4 ♖xb1 is remarkably like the above-mentioned game Wang Hao-Jones, but with a white-squared bishop instead. A draw is likely.

26...♘f4 27.♕e1?

This is a clear mistake. After 27.♘d2 ♗xd2 28.♕xd2 ♗xf3 29.♔h2 ♘xh3 30.♖a1 most humans would continue 30...g1♕+ 31.♖xg1 ♘xg1 32.♔xg1 axb5 which should end in a draw.

However, on move 30 Black has 30...♖h5!? 31.♔g3 ♘g5!? 32.♕e3 ♖h3+ 33.♔f4 h6!?, an unbelievable computer line that appears to favour Black. He combines an attack against White's king with the threat to promote his g-pawn.

27...♗xf3



Now Black's army is well-coordinated; he has a winning attack.

28.bxa6 ♘xh3+ 29.♔h2 ♗f4+

Or 29...g1♕+ which after 30.♕xg1 ♗f4+ 31.♔xh3 ♖xa5 transposes to the game.

30.♔xh3 g1♘+

An artist through and through.

31.♕xg1 ♖xa5

Kuznetsov resigned since he can only avert mate by giving his queen for one of Black's bishops. A well-deserved and fantastic win for the creative inventor of 10...d5.

CHAPTER 12

Arthur Kogan

Play the Spielmann Attack

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♘c3 ♗f5

Since I have always wanted to play for a win with black I have often used different gambits against classical 1.d4 and 2.c4 players: the Volga Gambit, the Blumenfeld Gambit and even the Budapest Gambit – as you can find in Chapter 4 in this same SOS volume.

However, in the last few years many people have started to get worried about such aggressive gambit lines, and usually when they face me they prefer to play the modest 2.♘f3, trying to prevent such gambit lines and aiming to cool down my opening ambitions.

In reply I have often relied on the aggressive 2...c5 3.d5 b5!?, which leads to sharp counterplay, but after a few good results it was no surprise anymore and people came prepared and found solid replies too.

So obviously in need of a new idea I started to search between the 'dusty shelves' of my brain, to slowly remember an idea which I had found some time ago. I remembered I had even tried it once, against WGM Cosma from Rumania, and analysed it for a bit, but since I could neither find nor remember the game I decided to have a quick look in the MegaBase. Surprisingly (for me that is), it contained some games with 'my idea' – this just confirmed my desire to try it again!

I will present here two analysed games: Roussel-Kogan and Grünfeld-Spielmann. Both games feature an early ...g5.

□ **Thomas Roussel-Roozmon**
■ **Arthur Kogan**
Montreal 2005

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 d6
A first small surprise for my young opponent.

4.♘c3
This is the most common response to 3...d6, since it's considered that against Benoni-structures, it is better to keep the c4 square for a knight and finish your development quickly to prepare a central break.
In case of 4.c4, next to 4...b5 – a Volga Gambit after 5.cxb5 a6, a typical SOS answer could be 4...♗f5!? (controlling e4 can't be so bad, right?). After 5.♘c3 ♘a6!? (threatening 6...♘b4! which psychologically can be unpleasant for a white player: to be 'under attack' in so early a stage) 6.a3, and now Black can play an original King's Indian/ Benoni-type of position with 6...g6. However, 6...e5 also make sense: 7.♘d2 e4!? (7...♗e7 8.e4 ♗d7) 8.♕c2 ♕a5 9.f3 ♗e7 10.fxe4 ♗g6 with compensation.
4...♗f5!
These days this may seem like an original or even strange move, but in fact this old idea was already employed by the creative (and classical) GM Rudolf Spielmann. Black is preventing e4 and from a certain point of view this is the most logical thing for Black to do here. Perhaps you should not be surprised to know that engines consider it as best move here!
Other possible lines include: 4...♕a5, 4...e6, 4...e5.
5.♘d2
This is the critical move against this line. White is fighting for control over e4, and hoping to gain a tempo to prove that 4...♗f5 was a waste of time, since ♘d2 with a future ♘c4 is anyway one of White's typical plans in this pawn structure.
● 5.e4!? is a risky gambit that can lead to very unclear complications after 5...♘xe4 6.♕d3:
– not 6...♘g3? 7.♕b5+.
– 6...♕a5 7.♘g5! c4 8.♕f3! (8.♕xc4 ♘xc3) 8...♘xc3 9.♕xf5! ♘e4+ 10.c3 ♘xg5 11.♕c8+ ♕d8 12.♕xb7 ♘d7 13.♗xg5 ♖b8 14.♕xa7 ♖xb2 15.0-0-0! with an attack.
– 6...c4!? is an option that deserves attention.
– 6...♘xc3 7.♕xf5 g6 8.♕d3 ♘a4 9.♕b3 ♘b6 10.a4 and White gets some compensation for the pawn.
● After 5.♘h4 Black can play 5...♗g4 and now:
– 6.h3 ♗d7 7.e4 e5 (7...b5!?) 8.♕f3 (8.♘f3 b5! 9.♗g5 b4 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♘b1 f5 with counterplay, Robveille-Dupre Guegan, Queven 1999) 8...g6 9.a4 ♘h5 (9...♗e7 10.♗h6±; 9...♗g7 10.♗e2±) 10.♘f5±.
– 6.f3 ♗d7 7.e4 e6 8.dxe6 ♗xe6 9.♘f5 ♗xf5 (9...g6 10.♘h6±, Tamarkin-Rose, Nassau 1988) 10.exf5 d5 with counterplay.
Best after 5.♘h4 is probably 5...♗d7 6.e4 e6 7.♘f3 when the game has transformed into the 4...e6 variation with a small difference: Black is a tempo up; he has played ♗c8-d7. For example: 7...exd5 8.exd5 ♗e7 9.♗e2 0-0 10.h3 ♘a6 11.a4 ♘c7 (11...♘b4! with ...♗f5 in the air seems very promising for Black) 12.0-0 b6 13.♗e3 ♖e8 14.♖e1 ♕c8 15.♘g5

♗f8 16.♗f3 ♗f5 17.g4 ♗g6 (the game is unclear, but after White's next Black gains the upper hand) 18.h4?! h6 19.h5 ♗xh5! 20.gxh5 hxg5 21.♗xg5 ♖xe1+ 22.♕xe1 ♕f5∓, Majer-Sö.Maus, Germany 1993.

After 5.♘h4 ♗d7 6.e4 Black may also consider 6...g6 which can't be bad, for what is the knight on h4 doing?

Also possible is 6...b5!? 7.♗xb5 ♗xb5 8.♘xb5 ♘xe4 (8...♕a5+ 9.♘c3 ♘xe4) 9.0-0 Kodinets-Gabrielian, Internet 2004. And now 9...a6 10.♘a3 g6 is playable.

5...g5!

This is the original idea I had in mind when I called 4...♗f5 a 'logical idea', but as usual these days, in a MegaBase search I found that it was played before.

However, this time I was made more curious since Spielmann made it all look so easy about 85 years ago. Black's idea is to hide ♗f5 behind the g5-pawn, and making it harder for White to play f4, at the same time Black also wants to fianchetto his bishop to g7. Another future idea is the pawn break with f5!

Oops, I forgot to mention: the move's disadvantage is obvious: it weakens the kingside.

The original inventor of 5...g5 also tried 5...e6, which is also playable but risky, after for example 6.e4 ♗g6:

– 7.♗b5+ ♘bd7 8.dxe6 fxe6 9.0-0 (interesting complications arise after 9.♘c4 ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♗xe4 11.♘xd6+ ♗xd6 12.♕xd6 ♕a5+ 13.♗d2 ♕xb5 14.♗g5?! – perpetual check is 14.♕xe6+ ♔d8 15.♗g5+ ♔c7 16.♗f4+ ♔d8 17.♗g5+ – 14...♔f7 15.0-0-0 ♘f6? – 15...♗d5!∓ – 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♕c7+ ♔g6 18.♖d7 with an attack, Berges-Goletto, Creon 2001) 9...a6 10.♗xd7+ (10.♗c4 ♗f7) 10...♘xd7 11.f4 ♗f7 12.a4 (12.f5±) 12...♗e7 13.a5 0-0 with counterplay, H.Danielsen-N.J.Nielsen, Denmark ch 1987.

– 7.♗e2 a6 (7...exd5 8.exd5 ♗e7 9.0-0 with f4 coming seems annoying for Black) 8.a4 exd5 9.exd5 ♗e7 10.0-0 0-0 (10...h5? 11.♘c4 ♘bd7 12.♖e1 ♔f8 13.♗f4±, Rubinstein-Spielmann, Triberg 1921) 11.f4!, when 12.f5 is a big threat and if 11...♗f5 then 12.g4!.

6.e4 ♗g6 7.f3!?

By overprotecting e4, White wants to lock up my bishop on g6 and at the same time to free ♘d2 to move to c4.

White has many other options, and this is not bad, since he has got something to think about after only a few moves! Thus, for example, 7.♗e2 ♗g7 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.♖e1 0-0 will lead to our next game Grünfeld-Spielmann, Bad Pistyan 1922.

● One of the more ambitious moves to try to refute Black's set-up is **7.h4!**. This was played in a rapid game between Yusupov and Milov. Milov picked up the whole idea by watching (with a big smile) one of my games in Benasque just few months before.

My personal recommendation would be 7...gxh4!? 8.f4 e6! to break White's centre and get some space for Black's pieces. This also looks dangerous for White.

Milov, however, played **7...g4**.

Now White could try 8.♗e2 h5 9.f4 gxf3 10.gxf3 ♗h6 11.♖g1± according to IM Tsesarsky. However, 10...♘bd7 11.f4 e6! seems very unclear to me, since White is far from happy with his pieces, as you can see yourself.

Yusupov played the stronger **8.h5!**.

Now 8...♗xh5 would lead to complex play after 9.♗b5+ (9.e5!? dxe5 10.♗b5+) 9...♘bd7 10.♘c4 ♗g6 11.e5 (11.♗g5⩲) 11...a6! (this is an important idea to have in mind) 12.♗xd7+ (12.exf6 axb5 13.♘xb5 ♘xf6 14.♕e2 ♗g7 eventually favours Black) 12...♘xd7 13.exd6 b5! (13...exd6 14.♕e2+ ♘e5 15.♗f4 f6 16.♗xe5 fxe5 17.♕xg4±) 14.dxe7 ♕xe7+ 15.♘e3 g3!.

Milov went for 8...♘xh5 instead, when the game continued 9.♕xg4 ♘f6 10.♕h4 ♘bd7 11.♗e2 h5?! (11...♗g7 is a logical improvement, playing ...h5 only if White plays 0-0, and otherwise Black can play for ...e6, and even ...0-0 since he has got two bishops to protect his majesty!) 12.g4! ♗g7 13.g5 ♘g4 14.♕g3 (14.♗xg4? hxg4 15.♕xh8+ ♗xh8 16.♖xh8+ ♘f8 17.♘c4 ♕d7∓) 14...f5? (better is 14...♗d4, but 15.♘d1! still favours White) 15.gxf6 ♘dxf6 16.f3 ♘e5 17.♘c4±, Yusupov-Milov, Bastia rapid 2002.

● Also logical is **7.♗d3 ♘bd7 8.♘c4**.

Now I would recommend the tricky pawn sac 8...a6 9.♗xg5 (9.a4 h6 might transpose to 8...h6) 9...b5 10.♘d2 c4 11.♗e2 b4 12.♘a4 c3! 13.bxc3 ♕a5! and Black seems to do fine, for example after: 14.♘b2 bxc3 15.♘dc4 ♕c7 16.♘a4 ♘xe4 17.♗e3 ♗g7. After 8...h6 9.0-0 (9.h4 g4) 9...a6 10.a4 I would prefer 10...♗g7 11.f4 (11.a5 ♘h5!) 11...gxf4 12.♗xf4 ♕c7 with unclear play. White is somewhat better after 10...♘b6 11.♘e3. While 10...♖b8 11.a5 gave White also a slight plus in M.Hoffmann-Si.Maus, Germany Bundesliga B 1989/90.

Now it is high time to return to the main game after 7.f3.

7...♘bd7

Starting the fight for e5! The alternative is 7...♗g7.

8.♘c4

Black has good counterplay after 8.h4!? gxh4 9.♖xh4 e6!.

8...h6

For a moment I even considered the funny 8...g4? until I found 9.fxg4 ♘xe4 10.♘xe4 ♗xe4 11.♕e2! ♗xd5 (11...♘f6 12.g5) 12.♘xd6 mate.

9.♗d3

Perhaps demonstrating that f3 was unnecessary, but in fact preparing the h4 break.

9.g4!? with the idea of h4 was interesting, but Black can reply 9...h5! 10.♗xg5 hxg4 11.fxg4 b5! (11...♘xe4? 12.♘xe4 ♗xe4 13.♘xd6+!) with nice active play.

9.h4 g4 is not a problem since e4 is vulnerable.

9...♗g7 10.h4

All these moves took my opponent a lot of time, so I already had the SOS advantage over him! In case of 10.a4 Black has 10...♘h5!.

10...gxh4

Original and probably playable was the gambit 10...g4 11.fxg4 h5!.

11.♖xh4

11...♘b6

With a space disadvantage it is normal to try to exchange a few pieces, and especially this annoying knight on c4.

A bit more accurate was 11...a6 though, threatening ...b5 and at the same time obtaining a safe square for my queen on c7. After 12.a4 ♘b6 (12...b5 13.axb5 axb5 14.♖xa8 ♕xa8 15.♘xb5) 13.♘e3 ♕c7 with the idea of preparing ...0-0-0 and breaking with ...e6 Black has nice counterplay.

12.♗e3

In the game I was a bit worried about 12.♘e2!? with the idea of ♘f4, but Black seems OK after 12...♘xc4 13.♗xc4 ♕c7 14.♘f4 0-0-0 with unclear play.

12.♘e3 ♕c7 13.a4 seems the most logical way for White, but it is still very unclear after 13...c4!? (13...a6) 14.♗e2 a5 15.♘b5 ♕c5.

12...♘xc4 13.♗xc4 a6

13...♕b6! was even stronger. It contains a nice trap: 14.♕d2? ♘xe4! 15.♘xe4 ♕xb2 16.♖c1 ♗xe4∓. After the stronger 14.♗b5+ (14.♗b3 ♘d7) 14...♘d7 (14...♔f8 15.a4; 14...♔d8 15.a4 a6 16.a5 ♕c7 17.♗e2) followed by ...0-0-0 Black is still more than fine.

14.a4

Black has decent counterplay after 14.♕d2 b5 15.♗e2 ♘d7.

14...♘d7

If 14...♕b6 then 15.♗b3. Another interesting option I thought about was 14...♕a5 15.♗d2 (15.♕d2 b5! 16.♗e2 b4 17.♘d1 h5) 15...♘d7.

15.♕d2 ♕a5 16.♘d1

16...♕c7!

A logical pawn sac, since with the white king in the centre and the knight on d1, I am not worried about a small pawn on h6. Here I was quite satisfied with the result of my opening, since not only did I have a nice time advantage, I also had a clear plan in mind! Black is ready to play ...0-0-0 and he will next try to open the centre by preparing ...e6 or even ...f5!

17.c3

After 17.♗xh6 0-0-0! 18.♗g5 ♘e5 (or 18...♗e5) 19.♗e2 f6 20.♖xh8 ♖xh8 21.♗f4 f5 and I prefer Black.

17...0-0-0! 18.♘f2

18.♗xh6 ♘e5 19.♗e2 and now 19...e6!. Although Black is spoilt for choice as 19...♖dg8 and 19...c4!? are also not bad.

18...h5 19.♖h1?!

The position is very original and White has to play very concretely. Better was 19.♘h3! with ♘f4 or ♘g5 ideas. After 19...♗f6!

20.♗g5 (20.♘g5 ♖hg8) 20...♗e5 21.♗f4 ♖dg8 Black is OK.

19...♘e5 Not 19...f5?! 20.exf5 ♗xf5 21.♗d3! e6 22.0-0-0±. **20.♗e2 f5!** As promised, here is the first pawn break! **21.exf5** Black is somewhat better after 21.0-0-0 fxe4 22.♘xe4 ♗xe4 23.fxe4 h4. The same goes for the game continuation though. **21...♗xf5 22.f4?!** 22.♗g5 ♖de8 followed by ...e6 is very strong. **22...♘g4 23.♘xg4** Or 23.♗d3 ♗d7. **23...hxg4 24.♔f2** 24.0-0-0 ♕a5∓. **24...e5!**

Here is the second pawn break! Black has a clear edge now.

25.dxe6

25...♗xe6

Even better was 25...♕e7! 26.♖ad1 ♖xh1 27.♖xh1 ♕xe6∓.

26.♖xh8 ♖xh8 27.♖d1 ♗f8!

Anyway my bishop did nothing on g7, so I want him to help to free my queen for more important actions than defending a small pawn on d6.

Black holds an edge after 27...d5 28.b4! c4! (28...♗f6 29.♗xc5 g3+ 30.♔g1 ♕h7 31.♔f1∞) 29.♗d4 ♕e7 30.♗xg7 ♕xg7 31.♕d4 ♕h6 32.♕e5 ♕h4+ 33.♔e3 ♖e8 34.♔d2 ♗d7 35.♕xd5 ♗xa4.

28.♕d3 ♕f7?

This logical move gives away all my advantage! I thought too much about my last few moves, and also got into time-trouble.

Correct was 28...♕e7! 29.b4 (29.♕g6 ♖g8) 29...g3+! 30.♔g1 (30.♔e1 ♗b3! 31.♖a1 ♖h1+ 32.♗f1 ♗c4!−+) 30...♗c4!! 31.♗g4+ ♔b8† 32.♕d2 ♗b3 33.♖e1 ♕h4 34.♗h3 ♗xa4 35.bxc5 dxc5 36.f5 ♔a7 37.♗f4 ♗h6!∓.

Worse was 28...♕g7? because of 29.♗xc5!.

29.b4! ♗e7 30.bxc5 g3+! 31.♔g1

A nice line is 31.♔xg3 ♗h4+ 32.♔f3 ♕h5+ 33.♔e4 ♕g6+ 34.♔f3 (34.♔d4 ♗f6 mate) 34...♗g4 mate.

31...dxc5

I even tried to calculate crazy lines like 31...♗f5!? 32.♕c4 (32.♕d5 ♕h7 33.♔f1 ♗e4 34.♕e6+ ♔b8) 32...d5 33.♕xd5 ♕h7 34.♔f1 ♗e4 35.♕e6+ ♔b8 36.♔e1 unclear.

32.♕e4!

32.♗f3 ♖d8 33.♕b1 ♖xd1+ 34.♕xd1 ♕g6∓.

32...♗f5

32...♖d8 33.♖xd8+ ♗xd8 34.♗xc5 ♗c7 35.♗h5.

33.♕e5!

My opponent played very well in the last few moves, and now I finally understood that I had lost my advantage and should start to take care. Wrong was 33.♕f3 ♕g6∓.

33...♖e8!?

Here 33...♖h6! was safer, but Black cannot hope to win after 34.♖d5 (34.♗f3 ♕h7 35.♔f1 ♗d3+ 36.♔e1 ♗d6 37.♗xb7+ ♔b8

38.♕d5 ♗c2) 34...♗d7 35.f5 ♖h4 36.♗f4 ♖h1+ 37.♔xh1 ♕h7+ 38.♗h5 ♕xh5+ 39.♔g1 ♕h2+ 40.♔f1 ♕h1+ 41.♔e2 ♕xg2+ 42.♔d3 c4+ equal.

White is better after 33...♕h7 34.♔f1 ♕h1+ 35.♗g1 ♕h7 36.♗f3. While 33...♖h4 is nothing after 34.♗f3 or 34.♖d5.

34.♖d5!

Again the best move! My tricky idea was 34.♗xc5 ♗d8! 35.♕d4 ♕h7 36.♔f1 ♗c7∓, with the treat of 37...♖d8, amongst others.

34...♗d7

The only move, played with a few seconds on the clock. Luckily, the white king is still not completely safe.

35.♗h5

On 35.♗f3 I planned 35...♕e6! when the game is equal after 36.♗h5! ♕xe5 37.♖xe5 ♖h8 38.♖xe7 ♖xh5 39.♖g7 ♗xa4 40.♖xg3 b6.

35...♕h7!

36.♔f1

White is probably playing for a win already, since he could secure the draw with 36.♖xd7! ♔xd7 37.♗xe8+ ♔xe8 38.f5 ♕h5 39.♕d5 ♕e2 40.♕g8+ ♔d7 41.♕e6+. Instead 41.♕xg3 ♕d1+ 42.♔h2 ♕xa4 is unclear.

Black is fine after 36.a5 ♗f8 37.♖xd7 ♖xe5 38.♖xh7 ♖xe3 39.♔f1 ♗e7!.

36...♖d8

I also wanted to fight on! Instead 36...♗f8 leads to a nice draw after 37.♖xc5+! (37.♗xe8 ♕b1+) 37...♗xc5 38.♕xc5+ ♔b8 39.♕a7+.

37.♗xc5

Still logical was 37.♖xc5+! ♗xc5 38.♕xc5+ ♗c6 39.♗g4+ ♖d7 40.♗xd7+ ♔xd7 41.♕d4+ ♔c8. With threats like 42...♕h1 and 42...♕b1 White appears to be in trouble, but he has 42.♗g1! ♕b1+ (42...b6! and the fight goes on) 43.♔e2 ♕c2+ 44.♔e1 ♕xg2 45.♕h8+ ♔c7 46.♕e5+ equal.

37...♕b1+

38.♔e2??

The decisive mistake in time-trouble. After a long series of good moves, White finally got tired I guess. 38.♖d1! was still a draw after 38...♗b5+ 39.♔e1! ♖xd1+ 40.♗xd1 ♗xa4 41.♕e6+! ♔b8 42.♕e5+ ♔c8 (and not 42...♔a8?? 43.♕h8+).

38...♕a2+

The immediate 38...♗f6!! was good as well: 39.♕d6 (39.♕xf6 ♕e4+) 39...♕e4+ (39...♗b5+−+) 40.♔f1 (40.♔d2 ♗f5−+) 40...♗b5+ winning.

39.♔f3 ♗f6!!

A big surprise!

40.♕e4

40.♕d6 ♗h3! also wins, but not 40...♗e7? 41.♕e5.

40...♗c6 **0-1**

White can't prevent losing too much material. Look at the black and white pieces, really a strange position, almost a kind of Picasso, right?

And now let's see a game by two strong creative GM's from the past, who between themselves invented more than a few openings. One of them is one of my all-time favourites the great chess artist: Rudolf Spielmann!

□ **Ernst Grünfeld**
■ **Rudolf Spielmann**
Bad Pistyan 1922

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♘c3 ♗f5

And here we go with the Spielmann attack! – it really would be to confusing to call it the Anti-Grünfeld, right?

Spielmann employed our subject for the first time in this game, and perhaps even for first time in history.

5.♘d2

Another interesting game of Spielmann's went 5.g3 h6 (5...g6; 5...♕c8!?) 6.♗g2 g5 7.h4 g4 8.♘d2 ♘bd7 9.e4 ♗g6 10.♘c4 ♗g7 11.♗f4 0-0 12.♕d2

12...♔h7 (or 12...b5 13.♘xb5 ♘xe4 14.♗xe4 ♗xe4 15.0-0 ♔h7) 13.f3 b5! An important typical idea we should always consider in this structure. Black had excellent counterplay in Kmoch-Spielmann, Vienna 1922.

5...g5! 6.e4 ♗g6 7.♗e2

In the previous game we looked at 7.f3, and the alternatives 7.h4 and 7.♗d3. Grünfeld chooses a normal, perhaps slightly modest set-up.

7...♗g7 8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.♖e1

Romanishin once tried 9.a4 0-0 (also not so clear is 9...h6 10.f3 ♘e5 11.g3 ♕c7 12.f4 gxf4 13.gxf4 ♘ed7 14.f5 ♗h7 15.♘c4 h5) 10.♘c4 ♘xe4 (I would recommend 10...h6! 11.f3 ♘h5 with counterplay) 11.♘xe4 ♗xe4 12.♗xg5 now White enjoys some advantage 12...♘e5 (12...♘b6 13.♖e1± – 13.♘e3 ♗xb2) 13.f3 ♗f5 14.c3 a6 15.♕d2 ♔h8 16.♘e3 ♗d7 17.f4 ♘g6 18.f5 and White had the advantage in Romanishin-Kayar, Istanbul Ech 2003.

9...0-0 10.♗f1 ♘e5

Another normal move is 10...h6. While 10...♗h5!? is also interesting. For example: 11.f3 g4 12.f4 g3 13.♗e2 gxh2+ 14.♔xh2 ♗xe2 15.♕xe2 h5!.

11.♘f3 ♘xf3+ 12.♕xf3

12...h6

As I already mentioned, exchanging pieces – especially a pair of knights – is making Black's life easier since he has less space.

13.♕d1

This is too passive. More critical was something like 13.h4 gxh4 (or 13...g4 14.♕g3 a6 15.a4 ♕a5!?) 14.♕h3 h5!? (14...♕d7 15.♕xh4 ♕g4) 15.♕xh4 ♘g4! with decent counterplay.

13...♘d7 14.♗e3

Again, more critical was 14.h4, but Black seems to do very well after 14...♗f6 (14...f6 is maybe OK but just looks too ugly) 15.hxg5 hxg5 16.♖e3! ♔g7 17.♖g3 ♖h8! (who cares about a small pawn here?) 18.♗xg5 ♗e5 19.♖h3 (19.f4?? ♗d4+) 19...♖xh3 20.gxh3 ♘f6 and even with a pawn down I would prefer Black. Actually, 20...♕b6!? is also good I guess.

14...♘e5 15.f3

15.h4 g4 keeps the knight on e5 for long enough to get serious counterplay on the kingside.

15...f5!

This is in fact the position I was dreaming of when I had first found this ...♗f5 and ...g5 line! Black breaks White's centre, increasing the radius of his bishop on g6, his rook on f8, and even his queen. While the other rook can join the 'party' very soon! And yes, Black will soon be able to announce a direct attack on the white monarch!

15...a6 16.a4 ♕a5 would be another plan playing on the queenside. However, when we finally have our dream position, why not follow our dream!

16.exf5 ♗xf5 17.♗f2 ♕e8!

No need to explain this move, but I would like to mention that apart from bringing the queen to the attack, the small pawn on c2 is also a target!

18.♖c1 ♕g6 19.♔h1 ♖f7!

Simple and good! The rook is coming to f8 and ready to help his friends as well!

20.♕d2 ♖af8 21.♗e3

21...♕h5!

Further improving the queen and preparing the march of the g-pawn.

22.♗g1 ♗c8!

Even though I am seeing this great game for at least the fiftieth time, I still enjoy it immensely because of the harmony between the pieces.

23.♗e3

23.♖c4 seems very solid, but Black goes on to attack with 23...g4 24.f4 g3 25.♗e2 ♘g4 26.h3 ♕h4.

23...g4! 24.f4 g3!

So many exclamation marks come instead of a simple bravo!

25.h3 ♘g6

Now pawn f4 is a new target! However, 25...♘g4! was more natural and probably stronger, but it was easy to miss the great combination after 26.♗e2 ♖xf4!! 27.♗xf4 ♘f2+

28.♔g1 ♘xh3+ 29.gxh3 ♕xh3 (also winning is 29...♗d4+! 30.♕xd4 ♕xh3!) 30.♗f1 ♗d4+ 31.♖e3 (31.♗e3 ♖xf1+ 32.♖xf1 ♗xe3+ 33.♕xe3 ♕h2 mate) 31...♕h4! and wins.

26.♘e2 ♕h4 27.c3 ♗g4!

The bishop is back in town again! After 27...♗f5 28.♗g1 ♗e4 (28...h5) the move 29.♘xg3! still holds.

28.♕d3

Black is better after 28.♕c2 ♗f5 29.♕a4 ♘e5! (29...b5 30.♕xb5 ♗e4 31.♔g1) 30.♘g1 (30.fxe5?? ♕xa4) 30...♘g4.

28...♘e5!

The start of a nice combination.

29.fxe5 ♗xh3??

But oh, this move could have destroyed an all-but perfect game! Possibly in time-trouble, and after playing a great game, Spielmann suddenly misses a very important defence.

The winning move order was first 29...♗f5! (to kick the white queen away from the defence) 30.♕b5 (30.♗g5 hxg5 31.♕xg3 ♗xe5 32.♕xh4 gxh4 is positionally lost for White) and only now 30...♗xh3! 31.gxh3 ♖xf1+! 32.♔g2 (32.♖xf1 ♕xh3+ 33.♔g1 ♕h2 mate) 32...♕e4+! 33.♔xg3 ♕xe3+ 34.♔h2 (34.♔g4 ♕g5 mate) 34...♕f2 mate.

30.♗g5??

Returning the favour! I guess that Grünfeld was in shock from the 'smooth' way in which he was outplayed, and just couldn't believe that Spielmann would let him escape. Consequently, he misses a golden chance: 30.gxh3! ♖xf1+ (but White is not forced to take it!) 31.♔g2!± (31.♖xf1?? ♕xh3+ 32.♔g1 ♕h2 mate). I guess he just forgot about this move! Now I don't see any win for Black, something that is confirmed by the engine. 31...♖1f2+ (31...♖1f3 32.♖f1) 32.♗xf2 ♖xf2+ 33.♔g1 ♕xh3 (33...♗xe5 34.♕g6+ ♔h8 35.♖f1) 34.♕xg3! is the problem, White's queen is doing an excellent defensive job and now Black is suddenly lost.

30...♗xg2+!

And because of the mate on h2 White resigned! I hope you enjoyed this game as much as I did enjoy watching it again!

CHAPTER 13

Alexander Finkel

An Old Idea in the Modern Defence

An interesting pawn sacrifice

In this chapter I'm going to draw your attention to a very interesting pawn sacrifice, which I employed on a couple of occasions in the mid 1990s.

Frankly speaking I don't even remember how and where I found this idea (by 'found' I mean the source in which it was discovered as it wasn't my idea after all), but I guess it's not really important.

In the last decade of the 20th century the line 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 was quite fashionable. White was struggling to prove his advantage after 4.f4, so 4.♗c4 d6 5.♕f3 had become a rather popular move order. Over the years the popularity of 3...c6 gradually decreased, but 4.♗c4 d6 5.♕f3 remained one of the most popular ways to deal with 3...c6. I don't think that 5...♘f6!? is objectively better than the regular 5...e6, but it most definitely deserves very serious attention.

The acid test of Black's idea is accepting the pawn sacrifice with 6.e5 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘d5 8.♘xd5 cxd5 9.♗xd5 0-0.

This is the first critical position of this line. It's worth mentioning that White has successfully tried other moves than 10.♗xb7, which is most definitely Black's main concern. However, both 10.♘e2 and 10.♗f4 are not dangerous for Black if he reacts correctly (see below).

Which brings us to the next critical position, arising after 10.♗xb7 ♗xb7 11.♕xb7 ♕a5+ 12.c3 ♘a6. At the moment White is two

pawns up, but he is supposed to find the right path, which is actually not a very easy task, since there are plenty of tactical tricks at Black's disposal! Both commented games deal extensively with this position, so you should be fine after studying them!

In conclusion, I'd like to say a couple of words about the advantages and disadvantages of this line:

The main advantage for Black is that White is facing complex tactical problems right from the beginning of the game. Black gets a serious edge in development and good attacking chances if White misplays the opening. Another positive thing about this line is that it's perfectly sound, so Black never faces any real danger of losing, even if White plays the best moves!

On the negative side I'd like to mention White's ability to get a slightly better endgame, which will most likely end in a draw. However, it's pretty difficult to find an opening where White can't force a draw if he's really eager to do so!

□ **Juri Sinowjew**
■ **Alexander Finkel**
Budapest 1993

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗c4 d6 5.♕f3 ♘f6!?

The main theoretical continuation is 5...e6.

6.e5!?

There is no question that accepting the pawn sacrifice is White's only chance to fight for an opening advantage. White's queen is misplaced on f3, so after 6.h3 0-0 7.♗b3 ♘bd7 8.♘ge2 b5 9.a3 ♗b7 10.0-0 c5 11.♗e3 a6 12.♖ad1 ♖c8 White has to play accurately to keep the balance, Wang Zili-Finkel, Groningen 1996.

6...dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘d5 8.♘xd5 cxd5 9.♗xd5

Once again White doesn't really have much of a choice, as after 9.♕xd5 ♕xd5 10.♗xd5 ♗xe5 11.♘f3 ♗g7 Black doesn't experience any problems.

9...0-0 10.♗xb7 ♕a5+ 11.c3

The moves of both sides are forced. Bad is 11.♗d2? ♕xe5+ 12.♘e2 ♕xb2 13.♗xa8 ♕xa1+.

11...♗xb7 12.♕xb7 ♘a6

Black's counterplay is based on the ...♘c5-b3 idea and on his serious advantage in development. However, White has enough resources not just to keep the balance, but even to pose Black some problems.

13.♘f3!?

Forcing a transposition into a slightly better endgame. For 13.♕f3 see the next game.

13...♘c5!

Bad are 13...♖ab8? 14.♕xa7! (planning ♕e3-e2), and 13...♖fb8?! 14.♕xe7 ♕b5! 15.♗e3!± to limit the a6-knight. Dubious in this second line, by the way, is 15.♘d4?! ♕c4 16.e6 ♖e8! 17.♕xf7+ ♔h8 18.♗e3 ♘c5 19.0-0-0 ♕xa2 planning 20...♖ab8.

14.b4!

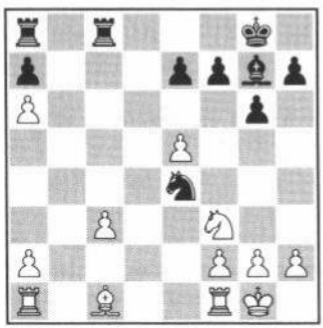
This is the only move, which illustrates the minefield that White has been forced to enter after 5...♘f6.

14...♘xb7 15.bxa5 ♖fc8?!

This move is a bit artificial, but during the game I was desperately looking for some winning chances.

It's objectively better to play the natural 15...♘xa5 16.♗e3 ♘c6 and now:
– 17.♖b1 ♘xe5 18.♘xe5 ♗xe5 19.c4 ♖ac8 20.c5 ♖fd8 21.♔e2 ♗d4 with equality. Leko-Hamdouchi, Cap d'Agde 1994.
– 17.♗d4 ♖fb8 18.0-0 ♖b2 (with sufficient compensation for the pawn) 19.♖fd1 (or 19.♖fe1 ♖d8! planning ...♖d5-a5) 19...♖c8?! 20.♖db1 ♖cb8 21.♖xb2 ♖xb2 22.♔f1±, Santo Roman-Bricard, Chambery ch-FRA 1994.
After the text White obtains a minimal edge.

16.a6! ♘c5 17.0-0 ♘e4!



It's much more important to get rid of the pawn on c3, as the one on a6 will eventually fall anyway.

18.♗a3 e6 19.♖fc1!?

Black also seems to be doing fine after 19.♖fb1 ♘xc3 20.♖b7 ♖c6! 21.♗b4 (21.♘g5 ♗xe5! 22.♖e1 ♗c7 planning 23...♘d5∓) 21...♘d5 22.♗d6 h6!, followed by ...♖xa6 on the next move with equal play.

19...♘xc3 20.♔f1! ♗h6!

It's vital to take square c1 under control.

21.♖c2 ♘b5 22.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 23.♗e7! ♘c7

Thanks to 20...♗h6 White is deprived of the opportunity to pin the knight by ♖c1.
White would win after 23...♖c7 24.♖b1 ♖xe7 25.♖xb5.

24.♖b1 ♘xa6 25.♖b7?!

Losing his advantage. After the correct 25.♖b3!? ♗f8 26.♗xf8 ♔xf8 27.♖a3 ♖c1+ 28.♔e2 White would keep a tiny edge due to the more active king.

25...♖c7 26.♖xc7 ♘xc7 27.♗c5 a6 28.♔e2 ♘d5

29.♔d3?

Missing Black's 31st move. Correct was 29.g3 ♘c3+ 30.♔d3 ♘xa2 31.♔c2 a5 32.♔b3 ♘c1+ 33.♔c2 with equality. Also equal is 29.a3.

29...♘f4+ 30.♔c4 ♘xg2 31.♔b4 ♘e1!

Preventing the white king to go to a5. Black should win now.

32.♘xe1

White is forced to transpose into a lost bishop ending, as after 32.♘d4 ♘d3+ 33.♔c4 ♘xe5+ he loses another pawn for no compensation.

32...♗d2+ 33.♔c4 ♗xe1 34.♗d4 g5 35.h3 h5 36.f3 ♔h7 37.♔c5 ♔g6 38.♔b6 a5 39.a4 ♔f5 40.♗e3 ♗c3?!

Wasting a precious tempo. Things would have been much easier for Black after the immediate 40...g4! 41.hxg4+ hxg4 42.fxg4+ ♔xe5 and wins.

41.♔b5 g4! 42.hxg4+ hxg4 43.fxg4+ ♔xe5 44.♗b6 ♔f4?

Another mistake, after which I had to work for another couple of hours in order to achieve victory, while after the rather simple 44...♔d5! 45.♗xa5 ♗xa5 46.♔xa5 ♔c5 47.♔a6 e5 48.a5 ♔c6 49.♔a7 e4 50.a6 ♔c7

51.g5 e3 52.g6 fxg6 53.♔a8 e2 54.a7 ♔b6! Black is winning by force.

45.♗xa5 ♗xa5 46.♔xa5 e5 47.♔b5 e4 48.a5 e3 49.a6 e2 50.a7 e1♕ 51.a8♕ ♕e5+ 52.♔b6 ♕d6+ 53.♔b5 ♔xg4

I must admit that I wasn't sure during the game what the theoretical evaluation of this endgame is (Black is winning), but fortunately it's not really important for our subject! Suffice to say that I won on move 112!

□ **Romeo Milu**
■ **Vadim Chernov**
Bucharest 1995

1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 c6 4.♗c4 d6 5.♕f3 ♘f6 6.e5 dxe5 7.dxe5 ♘d5 8.♘xd5 cxd5

9.♗xd5

As I already mentioned in my comments to the previous game White has nothing in case of 9.♕xd5 ♕xd5 10.♗xd5 ♗xe5 11.♘f3 ♗g7 12.c3 ♘c6 13.♗f4 Krajnak-Okhotnik, Kosice 1997, and now rather than 13...e6, 13...♗g4!? would have equalized.

9...0-0 10.♗xb7

– 10.♘e2 ♘d7? (correct is 10...♕c7 11.0-0 e6 12.♗b3 ♘c6 with equal chances) 11.e6 fxe6 12.♗xe6+ ♔h8 13.♕h3 ♘e5 14.0-0 ♕b6 15.♗xc8 ♖axc8 16.c3± L.Vajda-Mateuta, Bucharest 1997.

– 10.♗f4!? ♕c7!? (dubious is 10...♗g4?! 11.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 12.♕xg4 Borge-Hoi, Copenhagen 1997) 11.e6!? ♕xc2 12.exf7+ ♔h8 13.♘e2 ♕xb2 14.♖d1 ♘c6! 15.h4! unclear.

10...♕a5+ 11.c3 ♗xb7 12.♕xb7 ♘a6 13.♕f3!?

Another critical move for the evaluation of 5...♘f6!?. By playing this move White is willing to sacrifice an exchange in order to get some play on the kingside later on.

13.♘f3 was examined in the previous game. Weaker is 13.♘e2 ♘c5 14.♕f3 ♘b3 15.axb3 ♕xa1 16.♕e4 ♖ab8 17.0-0 ♖xb3 18.e6 f5 19.♕d5 ♕a4∓, Ovetchkin-Gabdrakhmanov, Orel 1996.

13...♖ad8

14.♘e2

Dubious is 14.♘h3?! ♘c5 15.0-0 (15.b4?? ♘d3+ 16.♕xd3 ♕xe5+−+) 15...♘b3

16.axb3 ♕xa1 17.♗g5 ♕xb2 18.♗xe7 ♗xe5 with compensation.
While 14.♕e2? ♘c5! 15.b4 ♘d3+ 16.♕xd3 ♕xe5+ wins for Black.

14...♘c5 15.0-0!?

Needless to say that after 15.b4 ♕a4 16.0-0 ♘b3 17.♖b1 ♘xc1 18.♖bxc1 ♗xe5 Black has more than sufficient compensation for the pawn.

15...♘b3

16.axb3

This exchange sacrifice was White's idea behind his 13th move. It's pretty difficult for Black to bring his rooks into play, as the white knight takes up a very commanding position on d4. On the other hand, White can't create much on the kingside without opening the d-file for the black rooks by bringing the knight to g5, so Black is likely to get counterplay in any case!
16.♖b1 ♕xa2 17.♗g5 ♘d2 18.♗xd2 ♖xd2 is OK for Black.

16...♕xa1 17.♘d4 ♕a6

Not 17...♗xe5? 18.♘c6 winning, but 17...♕a2 is interesting.

18.♗e3?

This move is bad since it allows Black a clear tactical shot.
Practice has also seen 18.♗f4 ♖d7 19.h3 ♖fd8? (19...♕b6 was equal) 20.♘c6 ♖c8 21.e6! fxe6 22.♘b8 ♖xb8 23.♗xb8±, Thipsay-Koshy, India 1994.

18...♖c8?

Returning the favour. After the correct 18...♗xe5! 19.♘c6 ♗xh2+ 20.♔xh2 ♕xf1 21.♘xe7+ ♔g7 22.♘d5 ♕a6 the best White can hope for is to win back the exchange, which would leave him struggling for a draw.

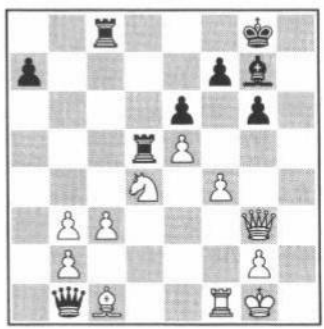
19.♕g3

Now White is on time to consolidate his position and start some action on the kingside.

19...♕a2

Play is unclear after 19...♖fd8 20.f4 ♖d5 21.b4 ♕b7.

20.♗c1 e6 21.h4 ♖fd8 22.h5 ♖d5 23.hxg6 hxg6 24.f4 ♕b1!



Bringing the queen into play and threatening to play 25...♖xd4.

25.♕f2

Here 25.♕f3 (planning 25...♖xd4? 26.♗e3±) deserved attention, keeping an eye on d3.

25...♕d3 26.♗e3 ♖a5 27.♘f3 a6 28.b4 ♖a2 29.♗c5 ♕c4 30.♘g5 ♗h6

Not 30...a5? 31.♗d6! and Black is helpless against ♕a7 and ♕h4 ideas.

31.♘h3!?

Correctly avoiding 31.♕h4 ♗xg5 32.♕xg5 ♖xb2 33.♖d1 ♕e2 34.♖d7 ♖c2 35.♖xf7 ♕xg2+! 36.♕xg2 ♖xg2+ 37.♔xg2 ♔xf7∓.

31...♕d5 32.♔h2 ♗f8 33.♗xf8

Without the bishops White's queenside

pawns become extremely vulnerable, so deserving of attention was 33.♗d4.

33...♔xf8 34.♘g5 ♔g7 35.♖e1 ♖h8+ 36.♔g1

36...♖h5?!

Strong was 36...a5! and now:

– 37.♘xf7? ♔xf7 38.♕a7+ ♔e8! 39.♕g7 ♖f8 40.♕xg6+ ♔d8–+.

– 37.bxa5 ♕xa5 38.♘e4 ♖b8∓.

37.♖f1 ♕a8 38.♖d1 ♕d5! 39.♖f1

Not 39.♖xd5? ♖a1+ 40.♕f1 ♖h1+ 41.♔xh1 ♖xf1+ 42.♔h2 exd5∓.

39...♕d3 40.♖e1 ♖h8 41.♘e4 a5!∓

Black is finally on the right track!

42.♘d6

White has no easy life after 42.bxa5 ♖b8! 43.♕e2 (43.♘c5 ♕c4 44.♖e2 ♖xa5 45.♘e4 ♖a2∓) 43...♕xe2 44.♖xe2 ♖bxb2 45.♖xb2 ♖xb2 46.♘d6 ♖a2 47.♘b7 ♖c2 48.♔f1 ♖xc3 49.♔e2 ♖a3∓, but maybe it was a better chance.

42...axb4 43.cxb4 ♕b3 44.f5!?

A desperate attempt to get some counterplay.

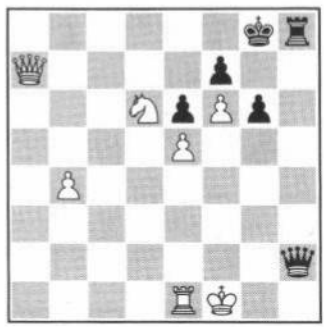
44...♖xb2!?

The simplest path to the win was 44...gxf5! 45.♕f4 ♖h5 46.♘e8+ ♔h8 47.♘f6 ♕xb2.

45.f6+ ♔g8 46.♕a7 ♖xg2+! 47.♔xg2 ♕b2+

Black has a forced win in the long line 47...♕h3+ 48.♔f2 (48.♔g1 ♕g3+ 49.♔f1 ♕f3+ 50.♕f2 ♖h1 mate) 48...♕h2+ 49.♔f1 (49.♔e3 ♖h3+ 50.♔e4 ♕g2+ 51.♔f4 g5 mate) 49...♕f4+ 50.♔e2 (50.♕f2 ♖h1+ 51.♔e2 ♕xe5+–+) 50...♕xe5+ 51.♕e3 ♖h2+ 52.♔f1 ♖h1+ 53.♔f2 ♕h2+ 54.♔f3 ♕h3+ 55.♔e4 ♕h4+.

48.♔g1 ♕h2+ 49.♔f1



49...♕h1+?

Missing a forced win with 49...♕f4+! and so on.

50.♔e2 ♖h2+ 51.♔d3 ♕d5+ 52.♔c3 ♕d2+ 53.♔c4 ♕d5+ 54.♔c3 ♖h3+ 55.♖e3 ♕xe5+ 56.♔c4 ½-½

As you probably know, in queen endings the number of pawns doesn't really matter in case the defending side has a passer. That's why after 56.♔c4 ♖h4+ 57.♖e4 ♖xe4+ 58.♘xe4 ♕xe4+ 59.♕d4 White has absolutely nothing to worry about.

CHAPTER 14

Jeroen Bosch

A Modest Indian

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘d2

This SOS could easily be dubbed Sadler's Opening Surprise. English grandmaster Matthew Sadler adopted the modest 3.♘d2 on a couple of occasions. Notably in a Monaco rapid game against Anand, and in a Bundesliga game against Igor Stohl (1-0 in 20 moves!). Other grandmasters on the white side include Vladimir Burmakin and Mikhail Ivanov. Lev Gutman has pointed out in *Kaissiber* 24 that the Soviet master Peter Romanovsky is a forerunner – his preferred move order was 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.♘bd2.

Why develop your queen's knight to d2 (where it blocks the bishop and does not control the important d5 square) when the 'natural' square c3 is still available? The main (technical) reason for doing so is the Grünfeld Indian. After 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 White has a classical centre, but the lever c7-c5 in combination with a bishop on the long diagonal, a knight on c6 and even a bishop on g4 will put intense pressure on d4. In contrast, after 3.♘d2 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 Black cannot take on c3 so White gains a full tempo. Moreover, after a subsequent ♘d2-b3 the lever ...c5 is prevented for some time to come.

So, 3.♘d2 is an excellent psychological weapon against Grünfeld players. In our main game we will witness how an experienced Grünfeld player like Igor Stohl does not make it past the twentieth move!

□ **Matthew Sadler**
■ **Igor Stohl**
Germany Bundesliga 1997/98

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘d2 d5

Stohl has been an adherent of the Grünfeld for so long that he probably makes his first three moves almost automatically. While technically this logical move cannot be a mistake of course, it must be exactly what Sadler had been hoping for.

● 3...c5 is not a bad move, but perhaps not a very likely response. Indeed, Benoni players will either prefer 2...c5 or a 2...e6 move order. 4.d5 ♕a5 (here 4...b5 5.e4 d6 6.cxb5 directly transposes to Beliavsky-Martinez, Las Vegas 2000. See SOS-3 for Alexander Beliavsky's chapter on 4.♘d2 versus the Volga!) 5.♘f3 d6 (here 5...♗g7 6.♕c2 0-0 7.e4 d6 8.♗e2 ♗g4 9.0-0 ♘bd7 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.♘xf3 a6 12.♗d2 ♕c7 13.♗c3 was better for White in Burmakin-Kodric, Ljubljana 1996 – via 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.♘bd2 c5 5.d5 ♕a5) 6.e4!?

– Now taking the pawn with 6...♘xe4 is met by 7.b4! ♕xb4 8.♖b1, when giving up the queen is insufficient: 8...♘xd2 (8...♕a5 9.♖b5 wins a piece for a few pawns) 9.♖xb4 ♘xf3+ 10.♕xf3 cxb4. From a material point of view Black is sort of OK, but White obtains a strong attack now with: 11.♗b2 ♖g8 12.c5! dxc5 13.♗b5+! and now either 13...♗d7 14.♗c4! or 13...♘d7 14.d6!.

– So, in Sadler-Anand, Monaco rapid 1998, Black went for the sober 6...♗g7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 e5 9.♖e1 ♘a6 10.a3 ♗d7 11.♖b1 with a slight advantage for White.

● 3...d6 4.♘gf3 ♗g7 5.e4 0-0 is a King's Indian with a (slightly silly) knight on d2 rather than on c3. This is Black's best option. I would now play 6.♗d3 and 7.0-0.

4.cxd5 ♘xd5

The Grünfeld move, but in this position taking with the queen is an option too. After **4...♕xd5 5.♘gf3 ♗g7** White has a strong pawn sacrifice with **6.e4!**

We are now at an important crossroads:

● Taking up the gauntlet with 6...♘xe4 is extremely risky 7.♗c4 and now:

– 7...♕a5 8.b4! ♕xb4 9.♖b1 ♕c3 (relatively best is 9...♘c3 10.♖xb4 ♘xd1 11.♔xd1; 9...♕a5 10.♖b5) 10.♖b3 ♘xf2 (10...♕a5 11.♖b5 ♕c3 12.♗b2) 11.♔xf2 ♕a5 12.♖b5 ♕a6 13.♖f5 ♕b6 14.♗xf7+ ♔d8 (14...♔f8 was Skembris-Makropoulou, Greece 1994) 15.♘c4 ♕a6 16.♖a5 ♕f6 17.♘e5 and White was completely winning in M.Ivanov-Kopylova, Kiel 2001.

– Better is 7...♕c6, although White probably stays ahead in the complications following 8.d5 ♕c5 9.♕a4+ b5 (9...♗d7 10.♘xe4) 10.♗xb5+ c6 11.dxc6 ♕xf2+ 12.♔d1 ♘c5

13.♕a3 ♘e6 14.c7+ ♘d7 15.♗c6. It makes sense to practice a little with your computer engine here. White is about to win material, but his king is in the centre.

● Passive is 6...♕a5 7.♗c4 c6?! (7...♘xe4 8.b4 transposes to the previous comment) 8.a3 (after 8.0-0! Black is playing a very passive Grünfeld) 8...0-0 9.b4 ♕c7 10.♗b2 ♗g4 11.h3 ♗xf3 12.♕xf3 was very pleasant for White in M. Ivanov-Hugentobler, Austria 2004/05.

● 6...♕d8 7.♗c4 (less logical is 7.♕c2 0-0 8.♗e2 ♘fd7?! – Black is fine after 8...♘c6 9.d5 ♘b8 followed by 10...c6 – 9.0-0 e5?! 10.♘xe5 ♘xe5 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.♘f3 ♗g7 13.♗g5 with a positional edge in Schukin-Rogovoi, St Petersburg 1999) 7...0-0 8.0-0 ♘c6 (8...♗g4 9.♕b3 ♘c6 10.e5 also favoured White in M.Ivanov-Bejaoui, Werther 2006) 9.e5! (9.d5 ♘b8 when 10...c6 might equalize) 9...♘d5 10.♘e4 ♗g4 11.♗e2 ♘b6 (the immediate 11...f6 also makes sense) 12.♗e3 f6 13.h3!? (the solid 13.exf6 promises a slight edge) 13...♗f5?! 14.exf6 exf6 15.♘c5 with a positional edge in Romanovsky-Gothilf, Leningrad 1938. Romanovsky employed the move order 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.♘bd2. On move 13 Black should perhaps have preferred 13...♗xf3 when 14.♗xf3 fxe5 15.♘c5 leads to interesting complications:

– 15...♘xd4 16.♗xb7 ♖b8 17.♖c1.

– 15...♖xf3 16.♕xf3 exd4 17.♘xb7 ♕d5 18.♕xd5+ ♘xd5 19.♗c1 ♖b8 20.♘c5.

– 15...exd4 16.♕b3+ ♔h8 17.♗d2 ♖f6 18.♘xb7 ♕g8! 19.♗e4 gives White more than enough for the pawn. He has two lovely bishops, possible pressure along the c- and e-files, and Black's pawn structure is disjointed.

5.♘gf3 ♗g7 6.e4 ♘b6 7.♘b3

White has formed the ideal d4-e4 centre, and avoided typical Grünfeld counterplay with ...c5. Note that the strategic ideas are fairly similar to those in Nadanian's ♘a4 system – see Jonathan Rowson's chapter in SOS-2 on 'The Improved Nadanian': 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.♘a4. It could be argued that b3 is a better place for the knight than a4.

7...0-0 8.♗e3

Sadler's choice, but 8.♗e2 also makes sense. After 8...♘c6 (8...a5 9.♗e3 transposes to Burmakin-Orlov below; if 8...♗g4 then 9.♗e3) 9.0-0 a5 10.♗e3 f5!? 11.exf5 ♗xf5 12.♘c5! ♖b8 13.♖c1 White is better anyway, but Black should now seek improvements over 13...e5 (13...♕d6!?) 14.♕b3+ (14.♘xb7!) 14...♔h8 15.dxe5 ♘xe5 16.♘d4, which was excellent for White, Mateuta-Bernard, Bucharest 2002. Again via the move order 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♗g7 4.♘bd2. Perhaps ♗e3 is always necessary while an early ♗e2 can be avoided sometimes – see our main game! So perhaps it makes sense to play 8.♗e3 and to take it from there.

8...♗g4

Harassing the knight on b3 hardly works: 8...a5 9.♗e2 a4 10.♘c5 ♘8d7 11.♕c2 c6 12.♖d1 ♖e8?! 13.0-0 ♕c7?! 14.♘d3 ♘f8 15.♗f4 ♕d8 16.d5! was too cooperative in Burmakin-V.Orlov, St Petersburg 1995. Burmakin again employed his preferred move order of 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.♘bd2.

9.♕d2

Very active, but 9.♗e2 is also very natural. The text and especially the follow-up is more double-edged.

9...♘c6

It is perhaps more accurate to play 9...f5!? as 10.♘e5!? ♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♕xd2+ 12.♗xd2 (12.♘xd2 f4!) 12...fxe4 13.h3 ♗f5 is OK for Black. When White settles for 10.h3 ♗xf3 11.gxf3 ♘c6 he has spent a tempo (h2-h3) on forcing an exchange that Black makes voluntarily in the game.

10.♖c1

Other moves include the mundane 10.♗e2 and the creative 10.♗b5!?.

10...f5 11.d5 ♗xf3

Not 11...♘e5 12.♘xe5 ♗xe5 13.h3, but interesting is 11...fxe4!? 12.dxc6 exf3 13.cxb7 ♖b8.

12.gxf3 ♘e5 13.♗e2

A typical Grünfeld position (from say the Russian variation) has arisen despite our 3.♘d2 start. White looks a little more comfortable here.

13...fxe4

Stohl is looking for complications. The typical 13...c6 is met by 14.f4 and now:

– 14...♘g4 15.♗xg4 fxg4 16.♘c5.

– 14...♘f7 15.dxc6 ♕xd2+ 16.♗xd2 bxc6 17.e5.

– 14...♘ed7 15.dxc6 bxc6 16.e5.

14.fxe4 e6!?

This was Stohl's idea. It is true that 14...♘f3+ 15.♗xf3 ♖xf3 16.♘c5 is just bad for Black.

15.dxe6 ♕h4 16.♖xc7 ♕xe4

17.0-0 ♖ad8?

This decides the game after Sadler's powerful retort. 17...♖fd8 is favourably met by 18.♕c2 ♕xc2 19.♖xc2 ♘d5 20.♗g5.

Best is perhaps 17...♘f3+ 18.♗xf3 ♕xf3 and now 19.♕d1 ♘d5 20.♕xf3 ♖xf3 21.♖xb7 ♘xe3 22.fxe3 ♖xe3 should lead to a draw according to Breutigam in *Schach Magazin 64* (1998/4).

However, 19.♖xg7+!? ♔xg7 20.♗h6+ ♔g8 21.♕d4 ♖f6 (can Black draw after 21...♕f6 22.♗xf8 ♕xd4 23.♘xd4 ♔xf8?) 22.♘d2! ♕f5 23.♖e1! favours White.

18.♖xg7+!

Much stronger than 18.e7 ♖xd2 19.exf8♕+ ♗xf8 20.♘xd2.

18...♔xg7 19.♗h6+ ♔g8 20.e7!

And Black resigned. After 20...♘f3+ 21.♗xf3 ♕xe7 22.♗xf8 he remains a piece down.

CHAPTER 15

Igor Glek

A 19th Century Weapon versus the French

1.e4 e6 2.f4!?

With 2.f4 we return to the nineteenth century, when modern chess understanding made its first steps. The basic idea is clear I suppose – after 2...d5 to play 3.e5! – gaining some space in the centre. So, in principle we see the same ideas as in the popular Advance Variation (2.d4 d5 3.e5), but White doesn't permit Black to create immediate counterplay against pawn d4 (as happens for example in the Advance Variation after 3...c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘f3 ♕b6).

Today we can judge how talented and creative players like Alexander McDonnell and Louis Charles De Labourdonnais were. Both of them were fighting the French with 2.f4.

Perhaps it is interesting for the readers to know why a French expert like myself has come to adopt such a seldom variation. I personally began to test 2.f4 after I lost two games with white in the French Rubinstein after 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 in early 2007 – against G.Meier in the German Bundesliga (4...♘d7) and against M.Stojanovic in the Swiss team championship (4...♗d7). As has been my custom in recent years I tried to play quite rare lines that brought me some success before, but this time I was not very happy after the opening. Well, I shouldn't blame my losses on the opening alone, but still. Moreover, the overall feeling was made even worse by the fact that these two games

represented my only two losses in the 2006/07 season in four team competitions Then in March 2007 the excellent chess journalist IM Max Notkin (www. chesspro. ru) sent me a letter with the 50 best chess games of 2006 (in his opinion) asking me to judge them and name the top-10 for his website's annual competition.

And you know, dear reader, which game I rated the best of all? Possibly you will be surprised, but in my opinion the top honours should go to Zviagintsev-Zhang Pengxiang (China-Russia Summit 2006)!

This game took my attention because of its originality – I'd say it was played on another dimension. Playing through the game it is very difficult to understand which move is good and which is bad. Almost as if Zviagintsev was playing anti-computer chess against his esteemed colleague!

It's very difficult to analyse the separate moves of such games! But the whole game is really a fine work of art.

GM Vadim Zviagintsev is probably one of the most creative modern GMs around. He is constantly trying to find new ways – remember his 4.g4 after 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4, and of course his 2.♘a3 in Sicilian! (See SOS-5). So, the fact that Zviagintsev played 2.f4 means a lot to me. Finally, I understood that this was just the perfect weapon for me these days (I am spending some time on organizational matters rather than on chess study): there is little theory and clear strategical plans.

So, I came to test 2.f4 in some games in the Swiss and French team championships in April-July. I won my first four games with this line, and I am eager to see what will happen next...

My opponents usually played in the same way as they would against 2.d4 d5 3.e5 line – ...c7-c5, ...♘b8-c6, ...♘g8-e7(h6)-f5. My reaction was ♘b1-a3-c2 and then not d2-d4 immediately, but first ♗f1-d3. Interestingly, we can already see this manoeuvre in McDonnell's and Labourdonnais' games! Finally, after the 'preparatory' ♘b1-a3-c2 White is ready to play d2-d4. However, it's not always essential to do so! A very interesting option is ♗f1-d3 without d4, which is how I played in the above-mentioned games. Before me GMs like Viktor Komliakov and Slavko Cicak did the same.

GM Dimitry Bunzmann tried against me to play like Rafael Vaganian sometime does against 2.d4 d5 3.e5 – without c7-c5, trying to exchange his bishop after b7-b6. But this is not a good option versus 2.f4.

So, what is the best way for Black here? Maybe to play ...d5-d4 (after an early ...♕b6 to avoid d2-d4), maybe ...f7-f6 somewhere. One thing is clear we need more games to come to any definitive conclusions here.

In general, there are many transpositions possible in this line. Strategical understanding thus takes precedence over memorizing moves. One final point: there is after 2.f4 no reason to be afraid of the Sicilian with 2...c5 as after 3.♘f3 Black's best and most consistent move is 3...d5 when after 4.e5 we have returned to our subject (of course the Grand Prix moves 4.exd5 and 4.♗b5+ are possible too).

□ **Igor Glek**
■ **Nicolas Curien**
Switzerland tt 2007

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.♘f3 ♘c6 5.c3 ♘ge7 6.♘a3 ♘f5 7.♘c2 h5

7...d4 8.♗d3 and now:

– 8...dxc3 9.dxc3 b6 10.0-0 ♗b7 11.♕e2 ♗e7 12.♖d1 ♕c7 13.♗xf5!? exf5 14.♘e3 ♗c8 15.♘d5 ♕b7 16.♗e3 Kr.Georgiev-Spiridonov, Chalon sur Saone 1991.

– 8...♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♕c2 ♕b6 11.♔h1

♗d7 12.b3 (also good are 12.g4 and 12.♗e4) 12...a5 13.♖b1 g6 14.♗a3 dxc3 15.dxc3 h5 16.♘d2 ♔g7 17.♘e3 ♘xe3 18.♕xe3 ♘a7 19.b4± Gamboa-Sadvakasov, Santa Clara 1999.

7...c4 8.d3 cxd3 9.♗xd3 ♗c5 10.♗xf5 exf5 11.♗e3 ♗xe3 12.♘xe3± Komliakov-Nogueiras, Dos Hermanas Internet 2004

After 7...f6 White has many reasonable options: 8.d4, 8.♗b5 and 8.cxf6.

8.♗d3

8.g3 ♗d7 9.d3 b5 10.♗h3 g6 11.0-0 ♕b6 12.♗d2 a5 13.♗e1 c4+ 14.♗f2 ♗c5 15.d4 with approximate equality in Bologan-Burmakin, Istanbul Ech 2003.

8...g6

8...♗e7 9.♗xf5 exf5 10.d4 ♕b6 11.dxc5 ♗xc5 12.b4 ♗e7 13.a4 ♗e6 14.a5 ♕c7 15.♗e3 ♖c8 16.0-0 0-0 17.♘fd4 ♘xd4 18.♗xd4 with a slight edge in Komliakov-Shabanov, Serpukhov 2004.

9.0-0 c4 Another option is 9...♕b6. **10.♗xf5 gxf5 11.d3 b5 12.♗e3 a5 13.♘fd4 ♘xd4 14.♘xd4 ♕d7** Not 14...♗c5? 15.♘xf5. **15.a4! ♗a6** White is also better after 15...b4 16.dxc4 dxc4 17.♕e2 or 17.♖f2. **16.axb5 ♗xb5 17.♘xb5 ♕xb5 18.dxc4 ♕xc4 19.♕a4+** Transposing into a clearly favourable ending. **19...♕xa4 20.♖xa4 ♗e7 21.♖fa1 ♗d8 22.b4 ♔d7 23.bxa5 ♖a6 24.c4! dxc4** Stronger was 24...f6. **25.♖d1+ ♔e7 26.♗c5+ ♔e8 27.♖b4! ♗c7 28.♖b7 ♖c6 29.♗b4 f6 30.♖a7 ♖h7 31.♖a8+ ♔f7 32.♖d7+ ♔g6 33.♖g8+ 1-0**

□ **Igor Glek**
■ **Andreas Huss**
Switzerland tt 2007

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 ♘h6 4.♘f3 c5 5.c3 ♘c6 6.♘a3 ♗e7 7.♘c2 ♘f5

Cicak-Degerman, Sweden tt 2001/02, went 7...0-0 8.d4 f6 9.♗d3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♘b4 11.♘xb4 ♗xb4+ 12.♔e2 ♗d7 13.♕b3 ♕b6 14.a3 ♗e7 15.♕xb6 axb6 16.♖g1 planning 17.g4 with a pleasant edge.

8.♗d3!?

The alternatives are 8.d4 and 8.♘e3. Thus a game of Russian women champion Korbut continued: 8.d4 a6 9.♗d3 c4 10.♗xf5 exf5 11.0-0 ♗e6 12.♗e3 0-0 13.♗f2 b5 14.♕e1 a5 15.♗h4 b4 16.♗xe7 ♕xe7 17.♘h4 Korbut-Tairova, Orel ch-RUS women 2006.

8...♘h4

Komliakov-Rychagov, Moscow 1997, instead went: 8...♕b6 9.♘e3 g6 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.♔h1 0-0-0 12.♖b1 ♕c7 13.♘c2 f6 14.♗xf5 gxf5 15.b4 fxe5 16.b5 ♘h8 17.♘xe5 and White is a little better.

9.0-0 c4 10.♗e2 ♘xf3+ 11.♖xf3

11...♗c5+ White remains somewhat better also after 11...f6 12.exf6 ♗xf6 13.d4. **12.♔h1 ♗d7 13.d4 cxd3 14.♗xd3 f5 15.exf6 ♕xf6 16.♗e3 ♗xe3 17.♘xe3 0-0-0 18.♘g4 ♕e7 19.♕e2± ♕d6 20.♖e1 ♖df8 21.♘e5 ♘xe5 22.♕xe5 ♕xe5 23.♖xe5 ♔c7 24.♔g1 ♔d6 25.g3 h6 26.h4 ♖f6 27.h5 ♗e8 28.c4!? ♗c6 29.♖fe3 b6 30.♔f2 ♖c8 31.b3 a5 32.♖e2** With the idea of ♔f2-e3-d4. **32...dxc4 33.♗xc4 ♗d5 34.♖d2 ♖c5 35.♗d3 ♔e7 36.♔e3 ♖f8 37.♗e4! ♖c3+ 38.♖d3 ♖xd3+ 39.♗xd3 ♔d6 40.♔d4 ♖d8 41.♖e3 ♖c8**

Now White finds a manoeuvre to transpose into a winning rook ending.
42.♗c4! ♖c5 43.♖e5! a4 44.♗xd5 exd5 45.f5 axb3 46.axb3 ♖b5 47.♖e6+ ♔d7 48.g4! ♖xb3 49.♖g6 ♔e7 50.♖xg7+ ♔f6 51.♖g6+ ♔f7 52.♔xd5 ♖b4 53.♔e5 b5 54.f6 ♖c4 55.♖g7+ ♔f8 56.g5 ♖h4 57.g6 ♖xh5+ 58.♔e6 1-0

□ **Igor Glek**
■ **Etienne Goudriaan**
Haarlem 2007

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 ♘h6 4.♘f3 c5 5.c3 ♘c6 6.♘a3 ♗d7 7.♘c2 ♘f5 8.♗d3!?

Here too White may consider 8.d4 or 8.♘e3. The latter was tried in Cicak-Koutsin, Prievidza 1996: 8.♘e3 ♗e7 9.♘xf5 exf5 10.g3 ♗e6 11.d3 0-0 12.♗g2 b5 13.d4 c4 14.a3 a5 15.♘d2 ♖b8 16.♘f1 ♕d7 17.♘e3 ♗d8 18.a4 with a clear edge.
After 8.♗e2 c4 9.0-0 h5 10.d4 b5 11.b3 ♕b6 12.♘e3 ♘ce7 13.♕c2 cxb3 14.axb3 a5 15.♖d1 ♘xe3 16.♗xe3 ♘f5 17.♗f2 ♗e7 18.c4 dxc4 19.bxc4 b4 Korbut-Guseva, Orel 2006, White should have preferred 20.♗d3± over the game continuation 20.c5.
8...♘h4
This manoeuvre was executed one move later in Komliakov-Psakhis, Yerevan Olympiad 1996: 8...♗e7 9.0-0 ♘h4 10.♗e2 ♘xf3+ 11.♗xf3 0-0 12.♕c2 f6 13.exf6 ♖xf6 14.d3 ♗d6 15.g3 with equal play.
9.0-0 c4 10.♗e2 ♗c5+
With 10...♘xf3+ 11.♖xf3 ♗c5+ (11...f6 12.exf6) 12.♔h1 Black would have gotten a position from Glek-Huss above with an extra tempo.
11.♔h1

11...♘f5?!
Again 11...♘xf3 like in the game Glek-Huss was much more logical. See the previous comment.
12.d4 cxd3 13.♗xd3
White has an obvious positional edge.
13...g6 14.♗xf5! gxf5 15.♗e3 ♗xe3 16.♘xe3 ♕b6 17.♕d2 ♖c8

17...0-0-0 may be better, now Black's king is not safe.

18.♖ad1 ♘a5 19.b3 ♗b5 20.♖g1

By all appearances 21.g4 is going to be very strong.

20...♕c7 21.♘d4 ♗a6

Now 22.♖c1 followed by 23.g4 was good enough for a big advantage, but White has another idea in mind...

22.♘dxf5! Crushing Black's position! **22...exf5 23.♘xd5 ♕c6** No improvement is 23...♕d8 24.♘f6+ ♔e7 25.♕e3 ♕b6 26.♘d5+. **24.♕d4!** With a clear idea: 25.e6. **24...♕e6**

And Black resigned not waiting for 25.♘c7+.

Black's game was beyond salvation anyway:

– 24...♖d8 25.e6 ♖xd5 26.♕xh8+ ♔e7 27.c4+– or 27.exf7+–.

– 24...♖f8 25.♘f6+ ♔c7 26.♕b4+ ♕c5 27.♖d7+ ♔e6 28.♕xc5 ♖xc5 29.♖gd1 ♖c6 30.♖d8 ♖xd8 31.♖xd8 ♖c7 (or 31...b6 32.♖e8 mate) 32.♖d6+ ♔e7 33.♘d5++–.

□ **Igor Glek**
■ **Dimitry Bunzmann**
France tt 2007

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 ♘h6 4.♘f3 ♗e7 5.c3 0-0 6.d4

Why not finally? Black has done little towards control over the important squares d4 and e5.

6...b6 Ah, now we can see that Black wants to play ...c7-c5 and wishes to exchange the light-squared bishops. **7.♗e3** Trying to gain some time. If 7.♗d3 immediately then 7...♗a6. **7...f6** 7...c5 was the alternative. **8.exf6 ♗xf6 9.♗d3** It's time to finish my development. **9...♗a6 10.0-0 ♘f5 11.♗f2 ♕c8 12.♖e1 ♘d6**

13.♗c2!

I had a distinct feeling that my bishop should be more useful than Black's.

13...c5 14.♘bd2 ♖e8 15.dxc5 bxc5 16.♘b3 c4

Black's position falls apart after 16...♘d7 17.f5.

17.♘c5 ♗b7 18.♘g5! ♗xg5 19.fxg5 ♘d7 20.♘xd7 ♕xd7

21.♗xh7+!

A typical sacrifice, the rest is quite easy.

21...♔xh7 22.♕h5+ ♔g8 23.g6 e5 24.♗h4 ♘f7 25.♕h7+ ♔f8 26.♖f1

And mate follows.

So here is the best game of 2006!

□ **Vadim Zviagintsev**
■ **Zhang Pengxiang**
Ergun tt 2006

1.e4 e6 2.f4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.♘f3 ♘c6

Playing consistently for control over the d4-square. Practice has also seen:

– 4...♘e7 5.c3 ♘bc6 6.♘a3 b6 (6...♖b8 7.d4 c4 8.♘c2 b5 9.♗e2 h5 10.♘e3 b4 11.0-0 ♘f5 12.♘xf5 exf5 13.♗d2 bxc3 14.♗xc3 Komliakov-Dragomaretsky, Moscow 1990) 7.d4 ♕d7 8.♗e2 h5 9.♘h4 g6 10.0-0 ♘f5 11.♘xf5 gxf5 12.♘c2 Komliakov-Volkov, Sochi 1997.

– 4...h5 5.c3 ♘h6 6.d4 ♘c6 7.♗d3 ♕b6 8.a3 ♗d7 9.b4 cxd4 10.b5 ♘a5 11.♘xd4 Smyslov-Vaganian, Moscow blitz 1993.

5.c3 ♗d7

A logical set-up developing the queenside first. There are plenty of alternatives of course. Historically interesting are:

– 5...♗e7 6.♗d3 ♘h6 7.♗c2 ♗d7 8.0-0 f5 9.a3 McDonnell-Fraser, London m 1831.

– 5...♕b6 6.♗d3 ♗d7 7.♗c2 f6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♔h1 0-0-0 10.a3 De Labourdonnais-Wilson, London 1837.

– 5...♕b6 6.♗d3 a6 7.♗c2 ♗d7 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 ♗b4+ 10.♘c3 ♘ge7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗xh7+ and White won in De Labourdonnais-Lecrivain, Paris 1837.

Note the positioning of the bishop in front of the d-pawn, the sometimes useful little pawn move a3, and the classical sacrifice on h7.

5...♕b6 as in these De Labourdonnais games is natural of course and reminiscent of one of Black's main set-ups against the Advance Variation. A few, more modern, examples after 5...♕b6 and now:

6.♘a3 ♗d7 7.♘c2 ♘h6 8.♗e2 f5 9.d4 cxd4 10.♘cxd4 ♘xd4 11.♘xd4 Cicak-Gdanski, Ostrava 1998.

6.♘a3 ♘h6 7.♘c2 ♗e7 8.d4 f6 9.♗d3 ♘f7 10.0-0 Biolek-Balogh, Slovakia tt 2005/06.

6.d3 ♘ge7 7.g3 ♘f5 8.♗g2 ♗e7 9.0-0 h5 10.♘a3 ♗d7 11.♘c2 0-0-0 12.♕e2 d4 13.c4 Komliakov-Ristovic, Pozarevac 1995.

– Also normal is 5...♘h6 6.♘a3 f6 (6...♕b6 7.♘c2 ♗d7 and now rather than 8.♘e3?! f6! Komliakov-Rustemov, Moscow 1998, Psakhis has recommended 8.d4) 7.d4 cxd4 8.cxd4 fxe5 9.fxe5 ♗xa3 10.♗xh6 ♗b4+ 11.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 12.♕xd2 ♗d7 13.0-0-0 ♕a5 14.♕xa5 ♘xa5 15.b3 ♔e7 16.♔d2 ½-½ Cicak-Kindermann, Germany Bundesliga 2000/01.

6.♘a3 f6

This typical French move is a novelty. Previous experience saw:

– 6...♕b6 7.♘c2 ♘ge7 8.d4 cxd4 9.♘cxd4 ♖c8 10.♘c2 ♘f5 11.♗d3 g6 12.g4, Cicak-Nothnagel, Germany Bundesliga B 1996/97.

– 6...♘h6 7.♘c2 ♗e7 8.d4 0-0 9.♗d3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♘b4 11.♘xb4 ♗xb4+ 12.♗d2 ♕b6 R.Biolek-Kukla, Strmilov 2005.

7.g3

Certainly not the only move that comes into consideration. Naturally 7.d4!? is possible,

as are 7.♘c2!? and 7.exf6!? ♘xf6 8.♗b5 (or 8.♘c2).

7...c4 8.b3 The move 8.♘c2 is met by 8...fxe5 9.fxe5 ♕c7. But interesting was 8.d4!? cxd3 9.♗xd3. **8...♕a5**

9.b4!? A worthwhile alternative is 9.♘c2!?. **9...♕b6 10.d4** Not 10.d3 ♘xb4! 11.dxc4 ♕a5. Possible was 10.♖b1!? ♘h6 11.d4. **10...a5! 11.b5 ♘a7 12.♖b1 f5** 12...♗xa3 is met by 13.♗xa3 ♘xb5 14.♘h4!?. **13.♘d2 ♗xa3 14.♗xa3 ♘xb5 15.♗b2** Or 15.♗c5 ♕c7 and now the exchange sacrifice 16.♖xb5!? ♗xb5. **15...a4 16.♗a3! g6 17.g4**

Is this a blunder or a sacrifice? As usual the answer here depends on the result. White has compensation after 17.♗g2.

17...♕d8! 18.♖xb5 ♗xb5

It looks that there is no necessity to win a second pawn by sending the queen outside: 18...♕h4+ 19.♔e2 ♕xg4+ 20.♘f3 ♗xb5 21.♕b1 ♗c6 22.♔e3.

19.h4 ♘h6

Black is an exchange and one pawn up: what is White hoping for? However, let's see what is going to happen.

20.gxf5 ♘xf5 21.♘f3 ♕d7 22.♔f2 0-0-0

Perhaps 22...h6!? followed by ♔e8-f7!?.

23.♗h3 h6 24.♕b1 ♖df8 25.♕b4 ♖f7 26.♕a5 ♗a6 27.♖b1 ♘e7 28.♗d6 ♘c6 29.♕b6

It looks that White has excellent compensation. Or not? I don't know! And I guess neither does Fritz.

29...g5?!

If 29...♖e8 then 30.♖g1.

30.♖g1! ♖e8

White wins after 30...gxh4 31.♖g6 ♖e8 32.♖xh6 ♖h7 33.♖xe6 ♖xe6 34.♘g5. However, in the game White is winning too.

31.hxg5 hxg5 32.♘xg5 ♖xf4+ 33.♔e3 ♖h4 34.♗xe6 ♖xe6 35.♘xe6 ♖h3+ 36.♔e2 ♖h8 37.♖g7 ♘xd4+ 38.♕xd4 1-0

CHAPTER 16

Leonid Gofshtein

A Dynamic Ruy Lopez Surprise

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7

It must have been around 1993 when I first came to take this line seriously after a white game versus GM Jacob Murey. Murey is of course one the great explorers in chess. Who does not remember his astonishing novelty in the Petroff (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.d4 ♘xe4 4.♗d3 ♘c6!?). And I could mention many other ideas in all sorts of openings.

In our game after the well-known moves – 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.0-0 g6 5.c3 ♗g7 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 – Murey suddenly played 7...a6 (instead of the theoretical line 7...d5 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♖e1+ with a solid plus for White).

Now if White takes on c6 after 7...a6 then Black replies 8...bxc6 when he has good counterplay with two bishops compensating for his fractured pawn structure. If White retreats his bishop to c2 or c4, then Black has 8...d5 with good play. After 8.♗a4

Murey played the surprising 8...0-0, foregoing the opportunity to take up space in the centre with ...d5. I thought this was anti-positional for it allows White to play 9.d5 but it turned out that after 9...b5 we have merely reached a complex position, and, indeed, it was Black who was successful in the end.

A few years later whilst preparing myself for the coming Israeli championship I decided to widen my repertoire. It was at this moment that I remembered my encounter with Murey. I soon discovered that in this variation Black achieves dynamic positions like in the King's Indian or the Benoni – and these openings were more customary in my repertoire than the Spanish.

It was clear to me that this line was going to be a surprise for many of my opponents. Besides I did not have the urge to compete in a 'memory game', and in this line there were few long and forced theoretical variations. Over the years I have played this line every now and then and achieved decent results and positions that are close to my dynamic style. Among those who successfully play this line are the grandmasters: Benjamin, Korneev, Murey, Arkhipov, Varga; as well as the IMs Berkovich and Mozes. In 'former times' Bent Larsen also used to play 3...♘ge7.

□ **Leonid Shamkovich**
■ **Jacob Murey**
New York 1989

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 g6

This game will transpose to one of the main lines after 3...♘ge7. Editorial note: Glenn Flear wrote on 3...g6 in SOS-2.

4.c3

It is very 'Spanish' to play c3 and d4. It is this set-up that I will investigate in the first four games in this chapter. It is White's most common reply in practice. We will see that Black will often attack the centre later on with ...f5.

4...a6 5.♗a4

Editorial note: in SOS-2 Flear demonstrated that in this move order 5.♗c4 is White's best chance for an opening advantage. In this game play will simply transpose.

5...♘ge7 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 ♗g7 8.d5 b5

9.♗c2

9.dxc6 leads to unclear play. The game Butunoi-Gofshtein, Latschach 2007, went: 9...bxa4 10.♕xa4 ♘xc6 11.♗g5!? f6.

9...♘a5 10.♘bd2 d6 11.♖b1

White prepares b4 and tries to exchange or limit Black's active knight.

11...c5

A natural move, Black takes up space and secures his knight.

12.a3

White still aims for b4. After 12.dxc6, Black achieves equality with 12...♘axc6 13.0-0 0-0 14.♘b3 ♗e6.

12...0-0 13.0-0 f5!?

Black starts his play on the kingside. After 13...c4 White would obtain a clear edge with the manoeuvre 14.♖e1, ♘f1, and ♗e3-d4.

14.b4

Interesting is 14.♘g5. White wants to land a knight on e6. In this case Black should seek

play on the queenside and in the centre with: 14...fxe4 15.♘dxe4 ♕c7 16.♖e1 (16.♘e6 ♗xe6 17.dxe6 d5) 16...♘c4 17.b3 ♘b6 18.♘e6 ♗xe6 19.dxe6 d5 20.♘g5 c4 with complex play.

14...fxe4 Black also achieves counterplay with 14...cxb4 15.axb4 ♘c4 16.♘xc4 bxc4. **15.♘xe4** In case of 15.♗xe4 Black has a pleasant choice between 15...♘b7 16.♕c2 ♗f5 and 15...cxb4 16.axb4 ♘c4 17.♘xc4 bxc4 18.♕c2 ♗d7. **15...cxb4 16.axb4 ♘c4** Black's piece activity compensates for the weaknesses on his kingside. **17.♘eg5** White once again prepares to go to e6. **17...♕b6 18.♖e1 ♘f5!?** A dynamic defence. Black activates his pieces. **19.♘e6 ♗xe6 20.dxe6 ♖ae8 21.♗e4!? h6!?** To cover the g5-square. **22.♗d5 ♔h7 23.♖b3 ♘d4!? 24.♖d3 ♖f5!? 25.♘xd4** If 25.♗e4 then 25...♘xf3+ 26.♖xf3 ♖xf3 27.♗xf3 ♕d4. **25...♖xd5** Black aims to exchange pieces since pawn e6 will become weak in an ending. **26.♘f3** Or 26.♘b3 ♖xd3 27.♕xd3 ♕d8. **26...♖xd3 27.♕xd3 ♕c6** Preparing ...d5 to attack pawn e6. **28.♗f4**

White had to play 28.e7 followed by h4. In case of the immediate 28.h4 then 28...♘e5 attacks the pawn. For example: 28.e7!? d5 29.h4 ♘d6 30.h5 ♘e4 31.hxg6+ ♕xg6 32.♕xd5 with equal play.

Attacking g6 with 28.♘h4 does not work after: 28...♘e5 29.♕b1 (29.♕g3 ♖xe6 30.f4 ♘d3!) 29...♖xe6 30.f4 ♕c3!.

28...d5 29.♘d4

After 29.e7 Black gains the initiative with 29...♕f6 30.♗e3 ♖xe7 31.♕xd5 ♘xe3 32.fxe3 ♕b2.

29...♕b6 30.♘f3 ♕c6 31.♘d4

31...♘b2!

This lovely move stresses Black's initiative.

32.♕h3

Better was 32.♕d2, but even then White loses the pawn after: 32...♕c4 33.♗e5 (33.♗e3 ♘d3 34.♖d1 ♗xd4 35.♗xd4 ♕xd4 36.♕xd3 ♕xd3 37.♖xd3 ♖xe6) 33...♘d3.

32...♕c4 33.♗e3 ♕xb4 34.f4??

This move and the next were probably timetrouble mistakes.

Normal was 34.♖b1 ♕a3 35.♕f3 ♘c4.

34...♘c4?? 35.♕f3 ♕c3 36.h4 ♘d2 37.♗xd2 ♕xd4+ 38.♗e3 ♕e4 0-1

□ **Sergey Erenburg**
■ **Leonid Gofshtein**
Ashdod 2004

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.0-0

Yet another move order is 4.c3 a6 5.♗a4 g6 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4.

4...g6 5.c3 a6 6.♗a4 ♗g7 7.d4 exd4

8.cxd4 0-0

The normal move 8...d5 is more classical. With 8...0-0 Black does not occupy the centre, he will later attack from the side with ...b5, ...c5 and even ...f5.

9.d5

White wants to punish Black for his anti-positional play. Also possible are 9.♘c3 and 9.♗g5 when the follow examples illustrate Black's possibilities:

● 9.♘c3:

– 9...d5 (going for a blockade) 10.exd5 (10.♗xc6?! bxc6 11.e5 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 f6 14.exf6 ♗xf6 with counterplay Leonardo-Santos, Barreiro ch-POR 2000) 10...♘xd5 11.♗g5 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♕d6 13.♕d2 with an edge for White Fishbein-Murey, Vienna 1991.

– 9...b5!? (typical move for this line) 10.♗b3 ♘a5 11.♗c2 d6 12.h3 c5 13.♗g5 ♘ac6?! (correct was 13...h6 to first let White decide where to put the bishop: 14.♗h4 ♘ac6 15.♘d5 g5) 14.♘d5 f6 15.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 with counterplay Vasiesiu-E.Mozes, Timisu de Sus 1998.

● 9.♗g5?! b5 10.♗b3 h6 11.♗h4 d6 12.h3 g5!? looks dangerous, but Black should not fear any 'ghosts':

– 13.♗xg5 hxg5 14.♘xg5 ♗f6 (14...♗h6) 15.♕h5 ♗xg5 16.♕xg5+ ♔h7 17.♕h4+ ♔g7 18.♕g3+ ♘g6 disarms the attack.

– 13.♗g3 ♘a5 14.♘c3 ♔h8 15.♗c2 f5!? (another characteristic move) 16.♖e1 f4 17.♗h2 c5 with counterplay, Nepomniachtchi-Pavasovic, playchess.com 2006.

9...b5

This is Black's main idea. The move 9...♘a5 was also seen in practice. After 10.♘c3 Black was OK after both

– 10...d6 11.♗c2 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 ♘c4 14.♕e2 ♘e5 15.♗d2 f5 16.f4 ♘d7, Fogarasi-Varga, Gyula 1998, and

– 10...b5 11.♗c2 d6 12.♘d4 ♗d7 13.♗g5 h6 14.♗h4 ♘c4 15.b3 ♘a3, Krivokapic-Pilgaard, Budapest 2007.

10.♗b3

The retreat to c2 is possible too. Black has decent play as practice has shown:

10.♗c2 ♘a5 11.♘c3 (11.a4 b4 12.♘bd2 d6 13.♖e1 c6, Kupreichik-Arkhipov, Münster 1991) 11...d6 and now:

– 12.♖e1 ♘c4 (or 12...♗b7 13.♘d4 c5 14.dxc6 ♘exc6 15.♘xc6 ♗xc6 16.♘d5 ♖c8, Fusthy-Mozes, Hungary tt 1993/94) 13.♘d4 ♗d7 14.♖b1 c5 15.dxc6 ♘xc6 16.♘xc6 ♗xc6 17.♘d5 ♗xd5 18.exd5 ♕a5 Boudre-Murey, Paris 1990.

– 12.♘d4 ♗b7 13.♖b1 c5 14.dxc6 ♘axc6 15.♘xc6 ♘xc6 16.♗e3 ♖c8 17.a4 ♘b4 18.♗b3 bxa4 19.♗xa4 d5 20.exd5 ♘xd5 Brodsky-Murey, Rishon-le-Zion 1997/98.

Note that Black also gains good play after

10.dxc6 bxa4 11.♕xa4 ♘xc6.

10...♘a5 11.♗d2!?

An original idea to force Black to exchange his active knight for White's passive bishop.

11...♘xb3

Very risky is: 11...♗xb2 12.♗xa5 ♗xa1 13.♘c3!? (less clear are 13.♕c1 d6 14.♘c3 ♗xc3 15.♕xc3 ♖a7 16.♕f6 ♘c6 and 13.d6 ♘c6 14.dxc7 ♕f6 15.♗d2) 13...♗xc3 14.♗xc3 d6 15.♕d2 f6 16.♘d4 ♗d7 17.f4 with an attack.

12.♕xb3 d6 13.♗c3 c5

Black frees his game.

14.dxc6

Stronger was 14.♗xg7, although Black has good play on the queenside after: 14...♔xg7 15.♘bd2 f6.

14...♗e6!

A very important intermediate move.

15.♕a3

Also possible was 15.♕c2, when play might develop 15...♖c8 16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♘d4 ♘xc6 18.♘xc6 ♕e8! 19.♖c1 ♗d7 20.♕c3+ ♔g8 21.♘d2 ♗xc6 22.♕a3 d5 23.exd5 ♗xd5 24.♕xa6 ♖xc1+ 25.♖xc1 ♕e5.

15...♘xc6 Sacrificing a pawn to enter a drawish endgame. **16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♕c3+ ♘e5 18.♘xe5 dxe5 19.♕xe5+ ♕f6!** After the exchange of queens Black's king will become active. **20.♕xf6+ ♔xf6 21.♘c3 ♖fd8 22.♖ad1 b4!?** Forcing a double rook ending. **23.♘d5+ ♗xd5 24.exd5 ♖ac8 25.♖d2 ♖c5 26.♖fd1 ♔e7** Moving the king over to block the opponent's passed pawn. **27.f4 ♔d6** White offered a draw because of the manoeuvre ♖d8-b8-b5. **28.♔f2** **½-½**

□ **Ilya Smirin**
■ **Joel Benjamin**
Foxwoods 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.0-0 g6 5.c3 a6 6.♗a4 ♗g7 7.d4 exd4 8.cxd4 b5

Black immediately starts his play on the queenside. We have already seen 8...0-0 9.d5 and then 9...b5.

9.♗b3

The recent game Van den Doel-Gofshtein, Dieren 2007, went 9.♗c2!? d6 10.h3 0-0 11.♗e3 ♘a5 12.♘bd2 when White gained the initiative after the nervous 12...c5?! 13.dxc5 ♗xb2 14.cxd6. Stronger would have been 12...f5 with a decent game.

9...d6 10.a4

A typical 'Spanish' move to force a weakness on the queenside.

10...b4

It is better to close the queenside than to allow White to exchange his passive rook after 10...♗d7 11.axb5 axb5 12.♖xa8 ♕xa8 13.♘c3 with a clear edge for White.

11.a5 0-0 12.d5

White prevents ...d5. Black is OK after 12.h3 d5!? 13.e5 f6 14.exf6 ♗xf6 15.♗h6 ♖e8.

12...♘b8

Black manoeuvres his knight to c5. Worse was 12...♘a7 to go to b5.

13.♖a4?!

Not the most accurate move. Stronger was 13.♘bd2: 13...♘d7 14.♗c4 ♘c5 (14...♘f6 15.♕a4 ♖b8 16.♖e1 ♗b7 17.♕c2) 15.♖e1

c6 16.dxc6 ♘xc6 17.♗d5 ♗b7 18.♘c4 with a slight edge.

13...♗d7!?

14.♖a2

White must retreat since 14.♖xb4 ♗b5 is too dangerous.

14...♗g4 15.♘bd2

White has no advantage after 15.h3 because of 15...♗xf3 16.♕xf3 ♘d7 17.♗e3 f5.

15...♘d7 16.h3 ♗xf3 17.♘xf3 ♘c5

White may have two bishops, but Black's pieces are very active.

18.♖e1 ♖b8!? 19.♗c4 b3

Or 19...c6 20.dxc6 ♘xc6 21.♕d5 ♕c7 22.♗f4 ♘e5.

20.♖a1

After 20.♖a3 Black gains equality with precise play: 20...c6 21.♗xb3 ♕c7!? (21...cxd5 22.exd5±; 21...♘xb3 22.♖xb3 ♕xa5 23.♗g5±) 22.dxc6 ♘xc6 23.♗d5 ♗xb2 24.♗xb2 ♖xb2.

20...♖e8 21.♗d2!?

White finishes his development and would like to exchange the b-pawns.

Black has counterplay after 21.♘d2 ♖b4 22.♗xb3 ♕b8 23.♗c4 ♗xb2 24.♗xb2 ♖xb2. While play is equal after 21.♖e3 ♖b4 22.♗xb3 ♗h6 23.♖c3 ♗g7 24.♖e3 ♗h6.

21...♘c8!?

Opening a file for the rook, worse was 21...♗xb2 22.♖b1 ♗g7 23.♗xb3 c6 24.♗c4±.

22.♖b1

Also possible was 22.♕c1!? ♘a7!? (better than 22...♖xe4?! 23.♖xe4 ♘xe4 24.♗xa6 ♘e7 25.♗c4±) 23.♗h6 ♗xh6 24.♕xh6 ♕f6.

22...♕d7

Black activates his queen. Also not bad was the alternative 22...♖xe4!? 23.♖xe4 ♘xe4 24.♗xa6 ♘e7 25.♗c4 c6!? 26.dxc6 d5 27.♗xb3 ♘xd2 28.♘xd2 ♕xa5 with equality.

23.♗e3 ♖xe4 24.♘d2 ♖e7 25.♗xc5 dxc5 26.♘xb3 ♖xe1+ 27.♕xe1 ♗f8

Black has more chances to draw than White has to win.

28.♕c3

White has only a slight advantage after 28.♕e3 ♕a4 29.♖c1 ♘d6 30.♘xc5 ♕xa5 31.♗xa6 ♖xb2. Black has sufficient counterplay in case of 28.♕c5 ♘a7 29.♕e3 ♖b4 30.♘xc5 ♕e7.

28...♕f5!?

Accurate defence. Black prepares to move his knight over to d6.

29.♘d2

If 29.♖e1 then 29...♘d6 30.♗xa6 ♗g7 31.♕e3 c4!?.

29...♗g7 30.♕d3 ♕xd3 31.♗xd3 ♘d6

A draw was agreed here. Both sides have weaknesses and the opposite-coloured bishops are an important drawing factor as well.

□ **Vladimir Baklan**
■ **Joel Benjamin**
Moscow FIDE-Wch k.o. rapid (1.3) 2001

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.0-0 g6 5.c3 a6 6.♗a4 ♗g7 7.d4 exd4 8.cxd4 b5 9.♗b3 d6 10.h3

Here the energetic 10.♘c3 planning 11.♘d5 comes into consideration: 10...0-0 11.♘d5 h6!? 12.♘xe7+ (Black is fine after 12.♕c2 ♗g4 13.♘xe7+ ♘xe7 14.♗e3 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 c6 16.♖fe1 ♕d7) 12...♘xe7 13.d5 a5!? 14.a4 bxa4 15.♖xa4 ♗d7 16.♖a1 c5 or 16...c6 17.dxc6 ♗xc6 18.♖e1 ♕b6.

10...0-0 11.♘c3 ♗b7 12.♗g5

In case of the immediate 12.♘d5 Black has the prophylactic 12...h6, when the knight will be manoeuvred via a5 or b8. For example: 13.♕d2 ♘b8 14.♖e1 ♘xd5 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 16.exd5 c6.

12...h6 13.♗h4

Black also obtains good play after: 13.♗e3 ♘a5!? 14.♖e1 b4 15.♘d5 ♘xb3 16.♕xb3 ♘xd5 17.exd5 ♕d7∓.

13...♘a5

14.♗c2

White preserves his bishop. After 14.♖e1 Black has several satisfactory ways to obtain counterplay:

– 14...♕d7!? 15.♖c1 ♖fe8 16.♗g3 ♘xb3 17.♕xb3 c5 18.dxc5 dxc5 19.♖ed1 ♕e6.

– 14...♘xb3 15.♕xb3 ♕d7 with good play (but not 15...c5?! 16.dxc5 dxc5 17.♖ad1).

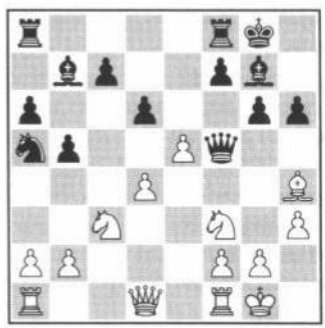
– 14...g5!? 15.♗xg5 (15.♗g3 b4!? 16.♘d5 ♘xb3 17.♕xb3 ♘xd5 18.exd5 ♕d7 and Black is somewhat better) 15...hxg5 16.♘xg5 ♗f6 17.♕h5 ♗xg5 18.♕xg5+ ♔h8 19.♕h6+ ♔g8 20.♖e3 ♘xb3 21.♖g3+ ♘g6 22.♖xg6+ fxg6 23.♕xg6+ with perpetual check.

After finishing his development Black must always gain counterplay by ...f5 or ...c5.

14...♕d7 15.e5?!

Black is also fine after 15.♖e1 ♖ae8 16.a3 f5.

15...♘f5! 16.♗xf5 ♕xf5



17.exd6

If 17.♗g3 then Black has 17...♘c4!? or even better 17...♗xf3!.

17...cxd6 18.♗e7 ♖fe8 19.♗xd6 ♘c4

White may be a pawn up, but Black holds the initiative.

20.♗e5 ♗xf3 21.♕xf3 ♕xf3 22.gxf3 ♗xe5!?

Taking with the bishop is superior to 22...♘xe5?! 23.dxe5 ♗xe5 24.♖ac1 ♖ac8 25.♖fd1 b4 26.♘a4. This is because the knight is active.

23.dxe5 ♖xe5 24.f4

Black also wins a pawn after: 24.b4 ♖g5+ (24...♖f5 25.♔g2 ♘d2 26.♖fd1 ♖g5+ 27.♔h1 ♘xf3) 25.♔h2 ♘d2.

24...♖f5

Stronger was 24...♖h5. For example: 25.b3 ♖xh3 26.♘e4 ♘b2!? 27.♔g2 (27.♘g3 ♘d3) 27...♖h4 (27...♖d3 28.♖ab1 ♖d4 29.♘f6+ ♔g7 30.♘h5+ gxh5 31.♖xb2 ♖xf4) 28.♔g3 g5 29.♘f6+ ♔g7 30.fxg5 hxg5 31.♘d5 ♖ah8.

25.b3 ♘d2?!

And here 25...♘b2 planning ♘b2-d3-f4 would have been preferable: 26.♘e4 ♘d3 27.♖ad1 ♘xf4∓.

26.♖fd1 ♖d8

There are more chances to win with the knights on, as can be seen from: 26...b4 27.♖xd2 bxc3 28.♖c2 ♖c8 29.♖ac1; 26...♖c8 27.♖xd2 ♖xc3 28.♔g2 ♖xf4 29.♖e1.

27.♘e4

White sacrifices a pawn to activate his pieces. Worse is 27.♘c2 ♖fd5 28.♔g2 ♔g7 29.♖ac1 ♖8d6 30.b4 ♔f6.

27...♘f3+ 28.♔f1 ♖xd1+ 29.♖xd1 ♖xf4 30.♘c5 a5 31.♖d8+ ♔g7 32.♖a8 ♖f5

33.♘d3?!

Good chances to draw gives 33.♘b7, see: 33...♖e5 (33...♘g5 34.♘d6 ♖f4 35.♔g2) 34.♔g2 (34.♖xa5 ♘d2+ 35.♔g2 ♖g5+ 36.♔h1 ♘f3) 34...♘e1+ 35.♔f1.

33...b4 34.♖d8 ♘d2+! Now Black gains a decisive edge. **35.♔e2 ♘e4 36.♖d4 ♘c3+ 37.♔e3 ♘xa2 38.♖d7 ♘c3 39.♔d4 ♘e2+ 40.♔e3 ♘g1 41.h4 ♘f3 42.♘f4 ♘xh4 43.♘e6+ ♔f6 44.♘d8 ♖e5+** Exchanging rooks for a winning knight ending. The alternative was 44...♖f3+ 45.♔e4 ♖xb3 46.f4 g5 47.♖xf7+ ♔g6. **45.♔f4 ♖e7 46.♖xe7 ♔xe7 47.♘c6+ ♔d6 48.♘xa5 h5 49.♘c4+ ♔d5 50.♔e3 ♘g2+** More simple was 50...♘f5+, to centralize the knight: 51.♔f4 ♘d4 52.♘d2 f6. **51.♔d3** Black wins after 51.♔f3 ♘e1+ 52.♔e2 ♘c2. **51...♘f4+ 52.♔e3 ♘e6 53.♘b6+ ♔c6 54.♘c4 g5** Better was 54...f6. **55.♘e5+ ♔d5 56.♘d3** After 56.♘xf7 g4 57.♘h6 ♘d4 58.♘g8 ♔e5 White's knight is out of play. **56...f5 57.♔d2?** Stronger was 57.♘xb4+: 57...♔d6 58.♘d3 g4 with chances for a draw. **57...♘c5 58.♘xb4+ ♔e4! 59.♔e2 f4 60.♔f1** Or 60.f3+ ♔f5 61.♘c6 ♘xb3−+. **60...♘xb3 61.♘c6 ♘d4 62.♘e7 0-1**

□ **Ivan Cheparinov**
■ **Mark Berkovich**
Andorra 2002

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.♘c3 With this move White prefers to control the centre with pieces.

4...♘g6

Here 4...g6 would transpose to positions from the 3...g6 line (see SOS-2).

5.d4

Interesting is the (modern) move 5.h4. I think that Black should play as in the game Borocz-Berkovich, Budapest 1998: 5.h4 ♘d4!? 6.♗c4 c6!? 7.♘g5 d5 8.exd5 ♗f5 9.d3 b5 10.♗b3 b4 11.♘ce4 h6 12.♘f3 ♘xb3 13.axb3 cxd5 14.♘g3 ♗g4 15.h5 ♘f4 16.♗xf4 exf4 17.♘e2 ♗d6 when Black's chances are to be preferred.

5...exd4 6.♘xd4 ♗c5 7.♘b3

7.♗e3 gains nothing after 7...♗xd4 8.♗xd4 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.f4 f5 11.g3 fxe4 12.♘xe4 ♗f5 13.♘f2 ♘xd4 14.♕xd4 c6 15.♗c4+ d5, with equality Hracek-D'Amore, Manila ol 1992.

7...♗b6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♘d5!?

Aiming to compromise Black's pawn structure on the queenside.

9...♘ce7!?

A novelty that prevents 10.a4 a6 11.♘xb6 with a clear positional edge. White achieved exactly this in Psakhis-Sokolov, Leeuwarden 1993, after 9...d6 10.a4 ♗e6 11.♗e2 ♖e8 12.c3 a6 13.♘xb6 cxb6 14.♘d4 ♗d7 15.♘f5 ♗xf5 16.exf5 ♘h4 17.♗d3 ♘e5 18.♗e4 ♕c8 19.♕d5.

10.♘xb6 axb6 11.f4

11...f6!? Black prevents the march of the white f-pawn. **12.♕h5 d5!?** Black gains counterplay with this characteristic move. **13.exd5** Or 13.♖d1 ♕d6. **13...♕xd5 14.♕xd5+ ♘xd5 15.♗d2 ♖d8 16.♗e2 c5!?** Black has no problems although White has a pair of bishops. **17.c4 ♘de7 18.♗c3 ♗f5 19.g3**

19...♗d3 After this exchange it is clear that Black has no worries. **20.♗xd3 ♖xd3 21.♖ae1 ♘c6 22.♘c1 ♖d6 23.b3 h5 24.♔f2 ♔f7 25.♖d1 ♖ad8 26.♖xd6 ♖xd6 27.♔e3 ♘ge7 28.♘d3 ♘f5+ 29.♔d2 ♘fd4 30.♖f2 b5 31.♗xd4 ♘xd4 32.cxb5 ♘xb5 33.♔e3 ♖e6+ 34.♔d2 ♖d6 35.♔e3 ♖e6+ 36.♔d2** In the end it is even Black who holds a minimal edge. **½-½**

□ **Konstantinos Moutousis**
■ **Alexey Dreev**
Tunja Wch-jr 1989

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘ge7 4.d4 exd4 5.♘xd4

5...g6

Black has many playable possibilities:

– 5...♘xd4 6.♕xd4 a6!?. When the game Tsebekov-Varavin, Elista ch-RUS 1996, went: 7.♗c4 b5 8.♗e2 ♘c6 9.♕d1 ♗c5. This deserves further tests. Wilhelm Steinitz once played 6...♘c6 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.0-0 d6 9.♘c3 ♗e6 10.e5 d5 11.f4 c5 12.♕a4+ ♗d7 13.♕a6 c6 14.f5 ♕c8 15.♕d3 ♗e7±, Fleissig-Steinitz, Vienna 1873.

– 5...♘g6!?. This may transpose to the previous game. After 6.0-0 ♗c5 7.♗e3 ♗b6 8.♘c3 0-0 9.♘ce2 ♘ce5 10.♘g3 d5 11.exd5 ♕xd5 play was equal in Topalovic-Krstic, Kastav 2002.

6.♘c3 ♗g7 7.♗e3 0-0 8.0-0 d5

Black immediately wants to solve his problems. Deserving of attention are both 8...d6 and 8...f5.

– 8...d6 9.♖e1 ♘e5 10.♗g5 h6 11.♗h4 g5 12.♗g3 f5 13.exf5 ♘xf5 14.♘xf5 ♗xf5, Geo.Timoshenko-Filipenko, Naberezhnie Chelni 1993.

– 8...f5!? 9.♗c4+ ♔h8 10.exf5 ♘xf5 11.♘xf5 ♖xf5 12.f4 d6 13.g4 ♖f8 14.♖f2 ♗d7 with counterplay, De Rivière-Steinitz, Paris 1867.

9.exd5 ♘xd5

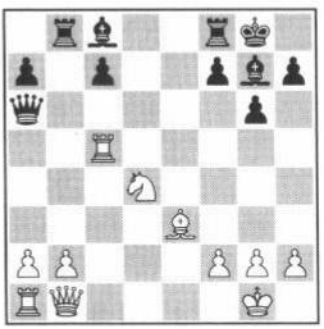
10.♘xd5

A critical position in this line. Interesting is 10.♘xc6 and White may keep some pressure: 10...bxc6 11.♘xd5!? (not 11.♗xc6?! ♘xe3 12.fxe3 ♖b8 with compensation, Kagan-Berkovich, Tel Aviv 1992) 11...cxb5 12.♗c5 ♖e8 13.♘e7+ ♔h8 14.♕f3 ♗e6 15.♖ad1 ♕b8 16.♘c6 ♕b7 17.♗d4 b4 18.♖fe1, with an edge in Dvoiris-Filipenko, Katowice 1992.

10...♕xd5 11.c4 ♕e4 12.♗xc6 bxc6

A pair of bishops is ample compensation for the weaknesses on the queenside.

13.♕b1 ♕h4 14.♖d1 c5 15.♘f3 ♕xc4 16.♖c1 ♕a6 17.♖xc5 ♖b8 18.♘d4



18...♖b4

Black is slowly taking over.

19.♘b3 ♕b7 20.♘a5 ♕a6 21.♕f1

Perhaps 21.♘b3!?.

21...♖xb2 22.♘c4 ♖b5 23.♖xc7

White is worse and therefore tries to complicate matters.

23...♗xa1 24.♕xa1 ♗f5 25.♘d2 ♖d8 26.g4

Black also wins after 26.♗h6 ♖b1+.

26...♖b1+!

Now Black wins by force.

27.♘xb1 ♖d1+ 28.♔g2 ♕f1+ 29.♔g3 ♕g1+ 0-1

CHAPTER 17

Dorian Rogozenko

Kamsky's 'Spare' Slav

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♕b6

Building an opening repertoire is a very complex and long process. Apart from learning and practicing, it also requires a permanent effort to keep your preferred openings up-to-date. It's a hard job, which few people can do properly. Therefore it is always good to have some 'spare' openings. These spare openings must be reliable and not very theoretical, so that you won't have to spend time keeping them up-to-date. And, such a spare opening should contain a surprise element. The move 4...♕b6 fits well into the above-mentioned categories. Due to the fact that it has never been a topical subject, there is a high probability that your opponent will be surprised and unprepared. Its reliability was best demonstrated in the last two years by Gata Kamsky, who after his return to chess (after almost 10 years of absence!) chose 4...♕b6 as one of his main weapons against 1.d4. Amazingly, in this opening system even top GMs failed to achieve any real advantage against the American GM.

The main and obvious idea of 4...♕b6 is to set pressure on b2 and thus prevent White from developing the dark-squared bishop. But there is another, more hidden idea behind the queen's sortie to b6: to develop the bishop from c8. Let me explain: in the Slav Defence before playing a move like ... ♗f5 Black must always reckon with the answer ♕d1-b3, after which it is not easy for Black

to deal with the pressure on b7 and d5. With the black queen on b6 White's ♕b3 won't be that dangerous anymore.
It's time to examine White's options in the diagram position.

Variation I

5.cxd5

This is a possible reaction if White is willing to transpose into the Slav Exchange Variation, where ...♕b6 is known to be a rare continuation. However, the queen on b6 will still prevent White from developing the dark-squared bishop and this factor should not be ignored, especially taking into consideration that in the classical Slav Exchange move order White develops the dark-squared bishop as quickly as possible, often even before his king's knight.

5...cxd5 6.a3

By taking control over square b4 White indirectly protects pawn b2. The idea is to prepare 7.♗f4, after which taking on b2 would be impossible due to the answer 8.♘a4, catching the queen. Other options are:
– 6.♕b3 ♕xb3 7.axb3 ♗d7 8.♗f4 ♘c6 9.e3 e6 10.♘e5 ♘xe5 11.♗xe5 ♗b4 12.♗d3 ♔e7 13.♔e2 ♖hc8=, Fridman-Slobodjan, Halle Wch-jr 1995.
– 6.e3 ♘c6 7.a3 ♗g4 8.♗e2 e6 9.0-0 ♗d6 10.♘a4 ♕c7 11.h3 ♗h5 12.b4 0-0 13.♘c5 a5 14.b5 ♘e7 15.♗b2 ♘c8 16.♖c1 ♕e7 17.a4 ♘b6 is very comfortable for Black, Nekliudov-Baklan, Cappelle la Grande 1997.
– 6.♘a4 ♕c7 7.♗d2 ♘c6 8.♖c1 e6 equal.

6...♗f5

Again preventing the development of ♗c1, since now 7.♗f4 loses a pawn after 7...♕xb2 8.♘a4 ♕c2.

7.♘e5

Alternatives lead to equal positions as well: 7.e3 e6 8.♗b5+ ♘c6 9.♘c5 ♗d6 10.g4 ♗xc5 11.gxf5 ♗d6. Or 7.♘h4 ♗d7. Or 7.♘a4 ♕c7 (threatening 8...♗c2) 8.♗d2 e6 9.♖c1 ♘c6 10.b4 a6 11.e3 ♗d6 12.♘c5 0-0 13.♗e2 ♗g4 14.h3 ♗h5 15.0-0 ♖fc8.

7...e6 8.e3 ♘fd7

The most accurate continuation. In case of 8...♘c6 White seizes the initiative with 9.g4 ♗g6 10.h4.

9.♗b5 ♗d6 10.0-0

Both 10.♘xd7 ♘xd7 11.♕a4 ♖d8 12.0-0 a6 and 10.♕a4 ♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♘c6 12.0-0 0-0 are better for Black.

10...♗xe5 11.dxe5 ♘c6 12.f4 ♗g6

Black has reasonable play.

Variation II

5.♕c2 Protecting b2 and preventing 5...♗f5. **5...♗g4** If not on f5, then on g4...

6.c5

We see here another feature of the queen on b6: 6.♘e5 is bad due to 6...♕xd4.

6...♕c7 7.♘e5 ♘bd7 8.♘xg4 ♘xg4

White has the bishop pair and a space advantage. However, Slav players won't be disturbed by such 'minor details'. They know that the exchange of the light-squared bishop for a knight is favourable in the Slav. Most importantly, by advancing the c-pawn White has closed the position and in the arising pawn formation Black is usually doing fine if he succeeds in playing ...e5. The only potential danger in such positions is the advance e4, and the question is how dangerous 9.e4 is now. Let's see.

9.e4

The alternatives are harmless:

– 9.♕f5 h5 10.e4 g6 11.♕f4 e5 12.dxe5 ♗xc5 13.e6 ♘de5 14.exf7+.

This position was reached in the very first game with the move 4...♕b6 – Schlechter-Süchting, Karlsbad 1911 (that's why 4...♕b6 is commonly known as the Süchting Variation). Now instead of going with the king to the centre – 14...♔d7?! – Black had to hide it on f8. After 14...♔f8 White is in trouble.

– 9.e3 e5 10.♗e2 ♘gf6 11.b4 (11.♗d2 ♗e7 12.b4 b6 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖ab1 ♖fe8 15.cxb6 axb6 16.♘b5 ♕b7 17.dxe5 ♘xe5 18.♘d4 b5 19.♘b3 ♘c4∓ Rubinstein-Dus Chotimirsky, Karlsbad 1911) 11...g6 12.b5 ♗g7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♖b1 ♖fe8 15.♖d1 ♘f8 16.bxc6 bxc6 17.dxe5 ♕xe5 equal, Shipov-Vysochin, Yalta 1996.

9...e5!

It turns out that Black is well-prepared for the confrontation in the centre.

10.exd5

The complications after 10.♗e2 exd4 11.♗xg4 dxc3 12.exd5 (12.0-0 ♘f6 13.♗f3 dxe4 14.♗xe4 ♗xc5∓) 12...cxd5 13.0-0 ♘f6 14.♖e1+ ♗e7 favour Black.

10...exd4 11.d6

11.♕e4+ ♕e5 12.dxc6 bxc6 13.♗f4 ♕xe4+ 14.♘xe4 ♘xc5 15.♘xc5 ♗xc5. White's compensation for the pawn is enough only for equality: 16.♖c1 (16.♗a6 was Ac-Singliar, Slovakia 1997, where Black had to continue 16...♖d8 17.♗b7 0-0 18.♗xc6 d3 19.0-0 ♗d6∓) 16...♗b4+ 17.♔e2 ♖d8 18.♔f3 h5 19.♖xc6 (19.h3 ♗d6!) 19...d3 20.♖c1 0-0 21.♖d1 (21.h3 g5! 22.♗xg5 ♘e5+ 23.♔e4 f6 24.♗f4 ♘g6∓) 21...♗d6 22.h3 ♘xf2 23.♔xf2 ♗xf4 24.♖xd3 with equality.

11...♕a5 12.♕e4+ ♘ge5 13.♕xd4 ♕xc5 14.♗e3

In case of 14.♕e4 ♗xd6 15.f4 (15.♗e3 ♕a5 16.f4 ♘f6∓) 15...♘f6 16.♕e2 0-0-0 17.fxe5 (17.♗e3 ♘d3+! 18.♕xd3 ♖he8–+) 17...♗xe5 Black has a powerful attack for the piece.

14...♕xd6 15.0-0-0 ♕xd4 16.♗xd4 0-0-0 17.f4 ♘g6 18.g3 b6 19.♗h3 ♔c7 20.♖he1 f6

Again White's compensation is at best only enough for equality, Yasinsky-Frog, Moscow 1995.

Variation III

5.♕b3 dxc4 6.♕xc4 ♗f5

The sharp alternative 6...♗g4 played once by Kamsky is objectively weaker: 7.e4! (after 7.♘e5 ♗e6 8.♕a4 ♘bd7 the position is about equal, since White cannot conveniently occupy the centre with the pawns: 9.e4 – or 9.♘xd7 ♗xd7 and again 10.e4 doesn't work out well: 10...e5! 11.dxe5 ♘g4 12.♕c2 ♗c5∓ – 9...♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♘g4 11.♕c2 ♘xe5 12.♗e3 – 12.f4 ♘g4 13.f5 ♗d7 leaves Black with a healthy extra pawn – 12...♕a5 13.f4 ♘c4 14.♗f2 g6 15.♗d4 f6 and White does not have enough compensation for the pawn) 7...♗xf3 8.gxf3 e6 9.♗e3 ♘bd7 10.0-0-0 ♕b4 11.♖g1 ♕xc4 12.♗xc4 ♖c8 13.♔b1 and, although the rapid game Krivoshey-Kamsky, Mainz 2007, ended with Black's victory, two bishops in an open position must secure White an advantage.

7.g3 e6 8.♗g2

8...♕b4!

The move played by Smyslov almost 30 years ago is the most logical continuation: Black uses the opportunity to exchange queens, after which White's plus is insignificant:

9.♘e5 ♘bd7 10.♕xb4 ♗xb4 11.♘xd7 ♘xd7 12.0-0 0-0 13.♗f4 ♖ad8 14.♖ac1 ♘b6 15.♖fd1 ♖d7 16.e4 ♗g6 17.a3 ♗e7 18.d5 cxd5 19.exd5 ♖fd8 20.dxe6 fxe6 21.♖xd7 ♖xd7 22.♖d1 ♖xd1+ 23.♘xd1 ♘d5

A draw was agreed in Gheorghiu-Smyslov, Buenos Aires 1978.

Variation IV

5.♕a4

5...e6 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.♕c2

The maneuver ♕a4-c2 is an interesting idea discovered by Igor Glek. White transposes into the Meran Variation, where the extra move ...♕b6 blockades the advance of the b-pawn. This indeed secures White a slight plus.

On the other hand it should be mentioned that many White players who are ready to meet the Meran often play e2-e3 at an earlier stage, e.g. 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3. Nowadays those who play 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 usually intend to answer 4...e6 with 5.♗g5, avoiding the Meran, which means that in our case many White players won't be ready for such a transposition.

7...♗e7

Perhaps an even better alternative is 7...♕c7 8.♗d3 dxc4 9.♗xc4 ♗d6 10.0-0 0-0 when by transposition we reach a quite reasonable sideline of the Meran: 11.♗d2 (11.h3 e5 12.♗b3 b6!? 13.♖d1 ♗a6 14.e4 ♖ae8 equal, Timoschenko-Schulze, Bad Wörishofen 1998) 11...a6. Here and on the next move Black can

go for the advance ...e5 with approximate equality, but in Peng Zhaoqin-M.Bensdorp, Leeuwarden ch-NED (Women) 2002, Black postponed it for a while and in a double-edged battle finally achieved an advantage.

8.♗d3 0-0 9.0-0 ♕c7

We have the 6.♕c2 Variation in the Meran with the slightly unusual ♕c7 for Black. In fact this is not a bad square, the plan being ...b6, ...♗b7, ...♖ac8, ...♖fd8. White is just marginally better:

10.♗d2

– 10.e4 dxe4 11.♘xe4 ♘xe4 12.♗xe4 ♘f6 13.♗d3 c5 14.♗e3 b6 was equal in Sitnik-Nikolov, Ljubljana 2004.

– 10.b3 b6 11.♗b2 ♗b7 12.e4 dxe4 13.♘xe4 ♘xe4 14.♗xe4 ♘f6 15.♗d3 c5 and suddenly it is White who must be careful to keep the balance, Sebenik-Nikolov, Ljubljana 1997.

10...b6 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.♖fc1 ♕b8

A suggestion of Glek's. In the game Glek-Baklan, Berlin 1997, Black defended against the threat 13.♘xd5 with 12...♔h8, which led to an inferior endgame: 13.♘b5 ♕xc2 14.♖xc2 a6 15.♘c7 ♖a7 16.♖ac1 ♗b7 17.a3, and although I am not sure whether this is really problematic for Black, 12...♕b8 is stronger.

13.a4

13.♘b5?! a6 14.♘c7 ♖a7 loses material.

13...a6 14.a5 b5 15.♘a2 ♗b7 16.♕b3

Play is equal after 16.♕c7 ♖c8 17.♕xb8 ♖axb8 18.♗b4 ♔f8.

This position is evaluated by Glek as slightly better for White.

16...♘e4 17.♗b4 ♗d6

17...♗xb4 18.♕xb4 (18.♘xb4 ♕d6=) 18...♖c8 19.♖xc8+ (19.♕e7 ♕d6=) 19...♕xc8 20.♖c1 ♕d8 is possible too.

18.♖c2 ♖c8 19.♖xc8+ ♕xc8 20.♖c1 ♕d8

With a draw as the most likely result.

Variation V

5.e3 ♗g4

In principle already here one can notice that Black has achieved a normal Slav type of position.

6.h3

– 6.b3 e6 7.♗b2 ♘bd7 8.♗d3 ♗e7 9.h3 ♗h5 10.♕c2 ♗g6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♗xg6 hxg6 13.e4 dxe4 14.♘xe4 ♘xe4 15.♕xe4 a5 16.♖ad1 ♖fe8=, Verdikhanov-Shabanov, Moscow 1991.

– 6.♗d3 e6 7.0-0 ♘bd7 8.a3 a5 9.h3 ♗xf3 10.♕xf3 ♗e7 11.♕g3 0-0 12.c5 ♕a7= 13.♗d2 b6 14.b4 axb4 15.axb4 ♕xa1 16.♖xa1 ♖xa1+ 17.♔h2 bxc5 18.bxc5 ♖c8 19.f4 h5 20.♕f2 ♖b8 21.♗e1 g6 22.♕d2 ♗d8 23.♗g3 ♖b3, and Black soon won in the Internet blitz game Socko-Kamsky, 2006.

– 6.cxd5 cxd5 7.♕a4+ ♗d7 8.♗b5 a6 9.♗xd7+ ♘bxd7 10.0-0 e6 11.♘e5 is Alekhine-Hromadka, Bad Pistyan 1922. Now the easiest way to complete development is 11...♖d8 followed by ...♗d6 and ...0-0, with a comfortable position.

6...♗xf3 7.♕xf3 e6 8.♗d3

– 8.c5 ♕c7 9.e4 dxe4 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.♕xe4 ♘d7 12.♗f4 ♕a5+ 13.♗d2 ♕d8 14.♗d3 ♘f6 with equality.

– 8.♕g3!? ♘bd7 9.♗d3 was met in Shulman-Seeman, Stockholm 1997/98, where Black produced the ugly 9...g6. Instead of playing an inferior strategical position, he should have gone for double-edged variations after 9...♗e7 (or 9...dxc4 10.♗xc4 ♕b4 11.♗d3 ♗d6 12.♕xg7 ♖g8 13.♕h6 ♖xg2) 10.c5 (10.♕xg7 ♖g8 11.♕h6 dxc4 12.♗xc4 ♖xg2) 10...♕d8 11.♕xg7 ♖g8 12.♕h6 ♖xg2 in all cases with unclear positions where Black certainly has his chances.

– 8.♗e2 ♘bd7 9.♕g3 ♗b4 10.0-0 0-0 11.♗d2 ♗xc3 12.♗xc3 ♘e4 13.♕h4 ♘xc3 14.bxc3 ♘f6 15.cxd5 cxd5 16.♖fb1 ♕c6 17.♖b3 ♖ac8 18.♗b5 ♕d6 19.♗d3 ♖c7 Black is slightly better, Z.Polgar-Kamsky, New York rapid 2006.

8...♗b4 9.0-0 0-0 10.♕e2 ♘bd7 11.♗d2 a5 12.♖fd1 ♖fe8

In a way this is a typical Slav position for Black: slightly passive, but with easy development and no weaknesses. The game Nisipeanu-Kamsky, Sofia 2007, continued:

13.♖ab1

13.e4? ♕xd4 14.♗e3 ♕e5∓.

13...♗f8 14.♗e1 g6 15.♕c2 ♕a7 16.♗f1 ♘b6 17.b3 ♘c8 18.♕b2

18.e4 ♘xe4 19.♘xe4 dxe4 20.♕xe4 ♗g7=.

18...♘d6 19.c5 ♘de4 20.a3 ♘xc3 21.♗xc3 ♘e4 22.♗e1 e5! 23.b4

23.dxe5 ♗g7 24.f4 ♕xc5∓.

23...exd4 24.exd4 axb4 25.axb4 ♗g7

Due to the weakness on d4 White should display some accuracy. The game was drawn after 47 moves.

Variation VI

5.g3

This move is a sign of a healthy flexible approach. In situations where White fianchettoes the bishop Black's most principled plan is to take on c4 and then protect the extra pawn by advancing ...b5. With the queen on b6 such a plan is no longer attractive.

5...♗f5

As mentioned, after 5...dxc4 6.♗g2 the queen is misplaced on b6. White will sooner or later regain his pawn (for instance ♘e5xc4) and will have better pieces in an open position.

But a reasonable alternative is 5...♗g4 6.♘e5 ♗f5 with the idea ...e6 and ...♘bd7. The loss of tempo (♗g4-f5) has its justification: first of all the bishop on f5 is more stable now, since Black doesn't have to worry about ♘f3-h4 any longer. Secondly, the knight on e5 is potentially exposed to an exchange for the b8-knight, which is something Black should be aiming for in such positions.

Here is the only available example from practice where Black played 5...♗g4: 6.♘e5 ♗f5 7.♗g2 e6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.♖e1 0-0 10.b3 ♘bd7 11.♘xd7 ♘xd7 12.e4 dxe4 13.♘xe4 ♘f6 14.♗b2 ♖fd8 15.♕c2 ♖d7 16.♖ad1 ♖ad8 17.♖e2 ♘xe4 18.♗xe4 ♗xe4 19.♕xe4 ♗f6

This is the kind of position Black is happy to get: on the board we have only those black pieces that create pressure on d4. Although White should be normally able to hold it, in the game Gazikova-Podoba, Slovakia 2000 Black went on to win.

6.♗g2

Or 6.c5 ♕d8!? (6...♕c7 transposes into 5.c5 ♕c7 6.g3).

6.♘h4 ♗e6 7.c5 ♕d8 8.♗g2 g6 9.0-0 ♗g7 leads to a typical position where it is rather difficult for White to make use of his space advantage. For instance: 10.b4 (10.f4 ♕c8!) 10...0-0 11.♗f4 h6 12.♘f3 ♘bd7 13.b5 g5 14.♗e3 ♗f5 and Black will prepare the central advance ...c5, with enough counterplay. Notice that if Black is willing to avoid any ♘h4-ideas, he can even start with 5...h6.

6...h6

White's only sensible attempt to fight for an advantage is connected with the advance e2-e4, therefore it makes sense to keep the light-squared bishop alive, since it controls square e4.

7.0-0 e6

White can claim a plus due to the fact that his position is slightly more active. But Black is solid and has no weaknesses. Here are a few examples from practice:

● 8.♕b3 ♕xb3 9.axb3 ♘bd7 10.c5 a6 11.b4 ♘e4 12.♗d2 ♘xd2 13.♘xd2 ♖d8 14.f3 ♗h7 15.e4 ♘f6 16.e5 ♘d7= Tisdall-Dambrauskas, Tanta 1998.

● **8.♘a4 ♕a6 9.cxd5 cxd5 10.♗f4 ♘c6 11.♖c1 ♗e7** 11...♕b5!?=. **12.♘c5 ♗xc5 13.dxc5 0-0 14.a3 ♕b5 15.♘d4** A rather forced positional pawn sacrifice, since after 15.b4 a5! 16.♘d4 ♘xd4 17.♕xd4 axb4 18.axb4 ♖a4 19.♗xh6 ♖xb4 20.♕e5 ♖c8 Black's chances are preferable. **15...♘xd4 16.♕xd4 ♕xe2 17.♗e5 ♘e8 18.♖fe1 ♕a6 19.b4 ♕c6 20.♕b2 a6 21.a4** Shulman-Seeman, St Petersburg 1997. According to Baburin, Black should now have played 21...f6 22.b5 axb5 23.axb5 ♕c8 24.♗d4, with an unclear position.

● **8.♘e5 ♗e7 9.b3** Or 9.c5 ♕d8 10.f3 ♗h7 11.e4 0-0 12.♗e3 ♘bd7 13.♘xd7 ♘xd7 14.e5 b6 15.b4 bxc5 16.bxc5 ♖b8 17.♕d2 ½-½ Hrbolka-Singliar, Klatovy 1998. **9...0-0 10.♗b2 ♖d8 11.e3 ♘bd7 12.♘xd7 ♖xd7 13.♕e2 ♗g4! 14.f3 ♗h5** with equal chances in Gusev-Seoev, Simferopol 1989.

Variation VII

5.c5 ♕c7 6.g3

6.♘e5 is best answered by 6...♘bd7 with favourable exchanges.

A very natural reaction from White – he seizes space on the queenside and prepares to develop the bishop on f4 with tempo.

On the other hand, now the position became static and White's plan is quite predictable: he will complete development and then advance his queenside pawns. This will increase White's space advantage, which can be dangerous for Black only if he fails to exchange any pieces, or if Black doesn't create any counterplay. In such positions Black has two possibilities for counterplay: either the central advance ...e5, or ...b6, which often stops the advance of White's pawns.

Those players familiar with the Chebanenko Slav will quickly notice that although being 1-2 tempos down, here it favours Black to have the pawn on a7 instead of on a6, which apart from controlling square b6 also makes the advance ...b6 much more effective.

In the diagram position Black has two possibilities to continue:

Subvariation A

6...♗f5 7.♗f4

7.♗g2 g6 8.h3 ♗g7 9.♗f4 ♕c8 10.g4 ♗e6 11.0-0 0-0 12.e3 h5 13.g5 ♘e4 14.♔h2 ♘xc3 15.bxc3 ♘d7 16.a4 b6 17.cxb6 axb6 18.♘d2 ♖a7 is a complicated position with mutual chances, Shulman-Stopa, Dallas 2006.

7...♕c8 8.♗g2

8.h3 ♘e4!? 9.♗g2 (9.♘xe4 ♗xe4 10.♗g2 ♘d7 11.0-0 g6=) 9...♘xc3 10.bxc3 Stohl-Mokry, Olomouc 1998. Now according to Stohl Black could achieve good play with a quick ...b6: 10...♘d7 11.0-0 (11.♘h4 ♗e6 12.e4 dxe4 13.♗xe4 ♘f6 14.♗g2 ♗c4!?∞) 11...b6 12.♘h4 ♗e6 13.cxb6 axb6.

8...g6

There is nothing wrong with 8...♗h3 then after 9.0-0 ♗xg2 10.♔xg2 ♘bd7 11.b4 Stohl considers that White is slightly better. Perhaps this is true, but Black can certainly play such a position. E.g. 11...g6 12.a4 ♗g7 13.b5 0-0 14.♕d3 (14.a5 allows quick counterplay: 14...♘e4! then 15.♕d3 runs

into 15...♘dxc5! and White's position collapses) 14...b6! 15.cxb6 axb6 16.bxc6 (16.♖fc1 c5) 16...♕xc6 17.♘b5 ♖fc8 18.♖fc1 ♕b7 with equality.

9.0-0 ♗g7

Black should be able to neutralize White's minimal edge:

10.♖c1

– 10.b4 0-0 11.b5 ♘e4=.

– A quick plan with e4 is not good: 10.♘d2 0-0 11.e4 dxe4 12.♘dxe4 ♘xe4 13.♘xe4 ♖d8 and White's centre collapses once more.

10...♘e4 11.b4 0-0 12.♘xe4 ♗xe4 13.♕d2 ♖e8 14.♖fd1 f6 15.♗h6 ♘a6 16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♕b2 ♘c7 18.a4 a6= Genova-Kalmukova, Bulgaria 1989.

Subvariation B

6...♗g4

Kamsky's recipe.

7.♘e5 ♗e6 8.♗f4 ♕c8 9.♗g2 g6 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.b4 0-0

Note that in general Black should aim for this arrangement of the pieces .

12.♖e1

After 12.b5 Black can choose between 12...♗h3 and 12...♘h5, preparing counterplay connected with ...f6 at some moment.

12...♘h5! 13.e3 ♘d7 14.♗f3

White's play is hardly impressive, but it only indicates that it is not so simple to stop Black's increasing activity in the centre and on the kingside.

14...♘xf4 15.exf4 ♘xe5 16.fxe5 f6!

Black exchanged pieces and created favourable play in the centre, achieving an advantage. Note that if White would have played b4-b5, then his problems would have been even bigger, since the pawn on b5 would have created additional weaknesses for White (White's pawn centre would have been more unstable). The game Bacrot-Kamsky, Sofia 2006 continued

17.exf6 ♗xf6 18.♗h1 g5 19.♕d2 ♕d7 20.♖e3 ♗f5 21.♖ae1 e6 22.♗g2 ♕g7! 23.♘e2 ♔h8 24.♖d1 ♖ae8 and although White managed to save this position, Black's advantage is unquestionable.

Conclusion: the drawback of 4...♕b6 is that White has a relatively large choice of attractive options. However, the good news is that White cannot achieve more than just a slight edge anyway. The main secret of 4...♕b6 is that Black shouldn't really care if White succeeds to emerge marginally better out of the opening. Apart from surprising your opponent with unexpected variation, the main idea of 4...♕b6 is to achieve a solid position and then play relatively simple chess, without having to worry about studying long theoretical variations.

CHAPTER 18
Who is Who

After some Caro-Kann misadventures Argentina's top-GM **Ruben Felgaer** decided to adopt 2.♘e2 a Nigel Short patent. The enigmatic knight move brought him success, and, as Felgaer candidly reveals, a disappointing loss under the 'stern eye' of the master.

In another SOS versus the Caro-Kann **Adrian Mikhalchishin** advises you to develop your knight to e2 too. He obtained his secret straight from the horse's mouth: 'babushka' Oleg Dementiev.

Some 15 years ago Hungarian IM Andras Meszaros invented a waiting move in the Classical Sicilian. **Dimitri Reinderman** debates the pros and cons of 5...♖b8.
The Dutch GM also takes a look at 1.c4 f5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.e4 fxe4 4.g4!?. Beware of the quills of the Porcupine!

With black **Arthur Kogan** likes to raise the stakes by playing all sorts of regular and irregular gambits. In this volume he reveals some personal secrets in the Fajarowicz Variation of the Budapest Gambit. While after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 c5 3.d5 he advocates the Spielmann Attack with 3...d6 4.♘c3 ♗f5. In both articles the Israeli GM demonstrates a liking for early ...g5 thrusts.

Kogan's compatriot **Alexander Finkel** has other preferences. He propagates an early ♕f3 against the reliable Paulsen/Kan Sicilian. And when they hit you with that same move in the Modern Finkel advises you to sac a pawn!

In the Nimzo-Indian 4.♕c2 is still going strong. **Matthieu Cornette** & **Sebastien Mazé** analyse an old Keene idea – 6...♕e8 – and convincingly demonstrate why modern GMs like Bauer, Pelletier and Nikolaidis have followed in his footsteps.

A few disappointing losses as White in the French Defence prompted **Igor Glek** to search for a new weapon. Via a best game of 2006 competition (Zviagintsev-Zhang Pengxiang) he arrived at McDonnell's and Labourdonnais' 2.f4.

Playing against a creative mind is inspirational. Impressed with Jacob Murey's handling of the old Ruy Lopez with 3...♘e7, **Leonid Gofshtein** explains how he changed sides and came to adopt this line with black.

Gata Kamsky has made a successful comeback to chess. Over the past few years he has relied on an obscure Slav with 4...♕b6. **Dorian Rogozenko** makes a thorough survey of the early queen move.

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